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THE GENIUS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION: A STUDY IN THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT OF GEORG WILHELM FRIEDRICH HEGEL

BY

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GEORG WILHELM FRIEDRICH HEGEL

by

[illegible]

Department of Religion
Duke University

Date: 12/14/60

Approved:

Robert E. Cushman
Robert E. Cushman, Supervisor

Waldo Beach

Frederick Herzog

Charles A. Baylis

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in the Department of Religion
in the Graduate School of Arts and
Sciences of Duke University

1961

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FOREWORD

The Christian religion is considered by Hegel to be the absolute and perfect religion. The question of why he did so prompted this study. Two basic issues are examined. First, what is the genius--the peculiar endowment, the unique content --identified by Hegel as the basis for his evaluation of the Christian religion? Secondly, what are the consequences of this interpretation of the Christian religion for the form and content of the Christian message?

The subject matter includes far more than Hegel's specifically theological writings. His philosophy is in itself, as Richard Kroner notes in his "Introduction" to Hegel's Early Theological Writings, "a speculative religion--Christianity spelt by dialectic."[1] This means that it is necessary to

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[1] G. W. F. Hegel, Early Theological Writings (Chicago, 1948), p. 53.

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FOREWORD

The Christian religion is considered by Hegel to be the absolute and perfect religion. The question of why he did so prompted this study. Two basic issues are examined. First, what is the genius--the peculiar endowment, the unique content --identified by Hegel as the basis for his evaluation of the Christian religion? Secondly, what are the consequences of this interpretation of the Christian religion for the form and content of the Christian message?

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[1] G. W. F. Hegel, Early Theological Writings (Chicago, 1948), p. 53.

examine Hegel's religious thought in terms of his philosophical system.

The Christian religion has the value of absolute Idea in Hegel's thought. His self-styled task, following from this evaluation, is to present the Christian religion as an expression of rational truth. In order to accomplish this rational statement of the content of the Christian religion, it is necessary, Hegel believed, to transpose the limited and restrictive forms of religious consciousness into categories of thought.

The underlying critical thesis pervading this analysis of Hegel's thought is that, in spite of his avowed intention to preserve the essential content of the Christian religion while giving it a new and more adequate form, Hegel, in giving it a new form, does in fact give to the Christian religion a new content--a content which radically contradicts the Christian witness to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. What is suggested by this critical review is that the content of the Christian religion is so related to its form that if the form is changed the content itself is changed.

The first of the three parts of this study is designed to introduce Hegel's philosophy of religion by placing it in the context of his system. Chapter One is devoted to the central themes of Hegel's thought. They are considered first in terms of Hegel's intellectual development and then in terms of Hegel's dialogue with the dominant philosophical systems of his own day. The positive result of this consideration is the

appearance of his philosophy as a system of the rational comprehension of Ultimate Reality. Chapter Two narrows the subject matter to religion in general. The subject is discussed, first, as the idea of religion, then as the objectification of the idea in positive, historical religions, and, finally, as the synthesis of the essence and existence of religion in the actual absolute religion. This last section introduces the theme of the second part--Christianity as the absolute and perfect religion.

Hegel's interpretation of the genius of Christianity as Idea focuses upon three central Christian doctrines. Each of the three--the idea of God as triune, the idea of the incarnation, the idea in community, or the reconciliation of finite and Infinite Spirit--is the subject of a chapter in Part Two. The specific concern of these chapters is to ascertain what happens to the content of each of these doctrines when they are interpreted in the form of objective true idea. The God which Hegel identifies with that of the Christian faith is essentially a representation of the dialectical pattern of the triplicity of the whole. The idea of the incarnation suggests the moment of the self-conscious union of Infinite and finite Mind. The mediator between God and man, for Hegel, is not Jesus Christ but the principle of mediation pictured by the joining of human and divine natures. The understanding of reconciliation in Hegelian thought, finally, is the under-

standing of Notion, and the salvation proffered by the system is a salvation by comprehension of a metaphysical principle.

The philosophy of Hegel is an exhaustive, and exhausting, statement of a systematic monism of Idea. As a philosophy of religion, it is the epitome of attempts to interpret religion as an expression of rational consciousness. Hegel produced a system which honors Christian doctrine as the Truth against the attacks of the cultured despisers of religion and the evasions of faint-hearted theologians. Whether or not it can be accepted, this interpretation of the Christian religion has the virtue of being a most thorough statement of a specific and distinct interpretation of the content of the Christian religion, which, regarded either as a systematic antonym or synonym, contributes to an understanding of Christianity as the Truth.

Erich Frank, in the "Foreword" to his _Philosophical Understanding and Religious Truth_, remarks that, for the modern thinker, in contrast with the Medieval philosopher, philosophy means "understanding that finds itself in search of a faith."[2] He adds to this his own suggestion that "by scrutinizing objectively its own presuppositions, philosophy once more may hope to find access to religious truth."[3] While the intended

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[2] Erich Frank, _Philosophical Understanding and Religious Truth_ (London, 1949), p. v.

[3] _Ibid_.

content differs from Hegel, this is an accurate statement of the result of Hegel's intellectual labors. Here understanding finds faith, since the systematic examination of the presuppositions of Idea leads, Hegel was convinced, to the rigorous establishment of Christian doctrine. The question of whether the presentation of the Christian religion as a system of rational truth preserves, explicates, or perverts the genius of Christianity is an issue which demands careful analysis of this approach and comparison with the content of the Christian faith.

Hegel sought to retain both his system of absolute knowledge and his faith and to bring philosophical comprehension and Christian experience into a genuine unity. To do this he labored to achieve a system of philosophy and a system of theology which would not only admit of mutual support but which would be parts of a unified system of the whole. Whatever may be the judgment on the system itself, the attempt to see Truth as unified and whole, and the attempt to comprehend in a system both culture and faith are doubtless worthy of respect.

From an entirely different perspective, finally, the following of what Hegel termed the labor of the notion to its end is a constructive enterprise because of what it reveals respecting the temper of modern man. It may well be that the spirit of the modern worldview, if not the content, has never been better expressed than by Hegel. A leading contemporary theological opponent of the anthropocentric standpoint, Karl

Barth, goes so far as to say that anyone who wishes to take modern man seriously, indeed, anyone who wishes to take himself as natural man seriously, must take Hegel seriously.[4] He describes Hegel's philosophy as "not at all the accidental discovery of one particular, gifted individual . . . but the mighty and impressive voice of an entire era, the voice of modern man . . . ."[5] Although ridiculed unmercifully by modern thinkers, Hegel, Barth suggests, articulated with singular clarity the self-confidence of modern man in himself--this is "self-confidence, qualified as confidence in God, confidence in God given concrete form as self-confidence."[6]

If the central issue for contemporary theology is the dialectic between a radically theocentric theology, expressed, for example, in the theology of Karl Barth, and the anthropocentric standpoint in theology, expressed, for example, in the theology of Paul Tillich, and if there is a perceptible tendency in contemporary theology to adopt a position in theology determined by a form of human consciousness,[7] then the content and result of Hegel's systematic reconciliation of reason and revelation warrants careful and critical review. This is true

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[4] Karl Barth, Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl, trans. Brian Cozens (New York, 1959), p. 281.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Cf. Robert E. Cushman, "Barth's Attack upon Cartesianism and the Future in Theology," The Journal of Religion, XXXVI, No. 4 (October, 1956), 207-223.

because Hegel articulated with supreme impressiveness a theology grounded in form of the consciousness of the human mind.

I want to record my appreciative recognition of the contributions to my intellectual development of the faculty of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and of those members of the graduate faculty of Duke University under whom I have studied. To Dean Robert E. Cushman I am most grateful for his maieutic labors in assisting at the deliverance of many ideas, and, in particular, I am grateful for his direction and critical review of this study of Hegel.

The aid of Mr. and Mrs. Donn Michael Farris in the preparation of the final copies of this manuscript has been invaluable. The meticulous work of Mrs. Farris in typing the manuscript is greatly appreciated. Professor Wesley C. Dykstra, a colleague and friend, has generously shared with me his insights into the thought of Sören Kierkegaard.

Finally, I want to acknowledge with heartfelt appreciation the patience and assistance of my wife. Through the long years of study in theological seminary and graduate school she cheerfully accepted a difficult role, and she has patiently borne with me as I agonized over the labor of the notion. Without her encouragement and assistance this task would not have been completed.

C. J. P.

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Part One

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE HEGELIAN PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Chapter I
THE PROTEST OF HEGEL

1. The Issue

The early writings of Hegel suggest that as a young man he was aware of the issue which was to direct his intellectual labors. The desideratum was the rational statement of a unity and wholeness in the understanding of reality. This fundamentally involved the reconciliation of apparent antitheses in thought and existence--the antitheses, for example, between the confused multiplicity of events in temporal history and a unity of meaning, or eternal idea, manifested in history. It involved reconciliation between subject and object in thought, and, ultimately, between the finite and the Infinite, or man and God. "The whole of philosophy," Hegel remarked in his Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, "is nothing else than

a study of the nature of different kinds of unity; . . . ."[1] Such a study continued to be the central problem of Hegel's philosophy throughout his intellectual labors, and it found expression, in one form or another, in all his writings.

The quest for the unifying principle of reality was not his alone. It is, Hegel recognized, as old as the reflective intelligence of man and as recent as the philosophical temper of the time. From the first philosophers of ancient Greece to the leaders of the Romantic Movement of Hegel's own day, a unity in the manifoldness presented itself as a lodestone attracting the labor of reflection. In his search for unity and in his persistent conviction of the reality of a unity underlying all distinctions and separations in thought and existence, Hegel was doubtless participant in the Romantic Movement of his day. However, the manner in which he gave expression to unity distinguished Hegel from his contemporaries. Only that which is intrinsically intelligible and logically manageable was finally acceptable to Hegel as the expression of unity. "The original unity of all things is for him," Richard Kroner states in his introductory essay to Hegel's Early Theological Writings, "not the object of a mystical or poetical intuition but a truth discovered by logic."[2]

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[1] G. W. F. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, trans. E. B. Speirs and J. Burdon Sanderson (London, 1895), I, 100.

[2] G. W. F. Hegel, Early Theological Writings, trans. T. M. Knox and Richard Kroner (Chicago, 1948), p. 15.

The inspiration for Hegel's first tentative solution of the problem of unity was expressly religious in nature. It involved an analysis of love as Hegel interpreted the idea of love in the Gospels. Love, Hegel was convinced, represented the reconciliation of human and divine life. Hegel's early work, The Spirit of Christianity,[3] written in 1798 or 1799, introduced this idea, which Richard Kroner calls "a pantheism of love," as the principle of unity. The teachings of Jesus, according to Hegel's analysis, overcome the separation inherent in the positive, that is, external, legalistic, spirit of Judaism. The infinite sovereign Lord of the Jews, a God set over against man and related to man as Lord and Governor, is replaced by the God revealed by Jesus, a God who is related to men in the manner of a father to his children.[4] This idea of God is finally and fully realized in the kingdom of God. The conception of the kingdom of God, in its essential significance for Hegel, completes the whole of the Christian message as the kingdom of life in God. A living bond is established, a relation, a bond of love which is the unification of what has hitherto been opposed, namely, God and man. "In love," Hegel writes, "man has found himself again in another."[5] Love by its very nature involves separation, "since love is a unification of life, it presupposes division, a development of life, a

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[3] Ibid., pp. 182-301. [4] Ibid., pp. 253 ff.

[5] Ibid., p. 278.

developed many-sidedness of life."[6] But this love is a unity in separation and union, that is, in love the separation of the two opposed to one another is overcome and they are united in the superior oneness of love.

The next stage in the development of Hegel's thought found him seeking the solution to the problem of the unity of opposites in a concept of life. This use of the category of life is suggested by passages in The Spirit of Christianity, but it was first employed as the express term for the unity of reality in a manuscript, unpublished in Hegel's lifetime, but produced in the year 1800. It has been entitled Fragment of a System[7] by the editors of his works. In this essay, life is conceived as the creative, unifying principle of all reality.[8] Life regarded as a finite, particular life participates in life infinite and eternal, and the two are one as "the union of

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6. Ibid., pp. 278-279.

7. Ibid., pp. 309-319. Only a small portion of what apparently was originally a much longer work is extant. Richard Kroner suggests that the manuscript consisted of forty-seven sheets of which only the thirty-fourth and forty-seventh survive (p. 309).

8. The concept of nature as a creative organism which constructs the whole of reality, advanced by Schelling at the University of Jena, was prominent in the philosophical discussion of the period when Hegel was writing this Fragment. Hegel was undoubtedly influenced in his development of the idea of life by Schelling's concept of nature. Hegel writes: ". . . it [life] is an infinite multiplicity of organizations or individuals, and as a unity it is one unique organized whole, divided and unified in itself--Nature" (ibid., p. 310).

union and nonunion."[9] The individual life of man "exists only inasmuch as the totality of life is divided into parts, he himself being one part and all the rest the other part; and again he exists only inasmuch as he is no part at all and inasmuch as nothing is separated from him."[10] Out of this self-opposed totality of life, the individual life realizes the ultimate, not as an abstraction but as "all-living and all-powerful infinite life; and this life it calls God."[11]

The elevation of finite life into the wholeness of infinite life was always to be the essential significance of religion for Hegel, and, at this early stage in his development, Hegel insisted that only religion is able to establish this unity. The reality of the union with the infinite is not a product of mere reflection.[12] Philosophy, Hegel maintained at this time, is obliged to stop short of religion and the truth that religion reveals; for reflective thought necessarily points to opposites without being able to attain, by the power of thought, the unified and complete infinite of religion.

The year after he wrote _Fragment of a System_ Hegel joined the faculty of the University of Jena, and the succeeding six years in that post were decisive for his development. The period closed with the publication of _The Phenomenology of Mind_ in 1807, and by this time Hegel had grasped the

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[9] _Ibid_., p. 312.

[10] _Ibid_., p. 310.

[11] _Ibid_., p. 311.

[12] _Ibid_., pp. 312 f.

fundamentals of his completed solution of the problem of wholeness and unity. The concept essential to the solution, and formally articulated at this time, is the Hegelian understanding of mind (Geist) and its actuality--reason (Vernunft). Philosophy, as the unfolded development of absolute knowledge, replaced religion as the fulfilling union of finite and infinite. Mind conscious of itself in absolute knowledge became the Ultimate.[13] Religion, Hegel now argued, prefigured but did not perfectly express this union.

It is quite plain that the essential elements of Hegel's final formulation of the unity underlying all distinction and separation in thought and being are expressed in his first major work--The Phenomenology of Mind. Here Hegel seeks to display the phenomena of mind as it develops from the lowest level of immediate consciousness to the pinnacle of the activity of mind in its awareness of itself as Absolute Idea. The analysis is of a connected whole, a development throughout of

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[13] If Hegel was to speak to the crucial philosophical problems of his own day--and to establish a principle of unity and wholeness for his day--it was inevitable that his thought should crystallize in a theory of knowledge; for the real problem Hegel faced was the bifurcation of reality on the basis of the epistemological separation of subject and object. This, the key dilemma of modern philosophy, was first presented in the thought of Descartes and later found full expression in the critical philosophy of Kant. The great desideratum for Hegel was a principle of unity, and, in establishing his principle of unity, he expressed it in terms of a theory of knowledge which was designed to overcome the epistemological isolation of subject and object both in experience and in reality.

mind. The final moment of absolute knowledge is the culmination of a determined process of development. The Phenomenology is an attempt to formulate a scientific statement of one manner in which this consciousness develops. The emphasis is on one phenomenon itself as one process of one self-determination of mind leading to absolute knowledge. Here Hegel first developed the character of his dynamic dialectical process of mind. The whole is a connected developmental process. The content and process of reason is implicit in simple, direct awareness and is explicitly realized in Absolute Idea. Throughout the whole account of the development of mind from simple awareness, or consciousness, to mind at the advanced level of the religious consciousness of union with its other and, finally, the philosophical consciousness of absolute knowledge, the same process of mind, the identity in difference of subject and object, is essential.

The word "Geist," with all it connotes for Hegel's system, is imperfectly represented when it is translated simply as "mind."[14] The word carries both the idea of mind as rational activity and Mind as Ultimate Reality; it represents as

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[14] The principal translators of Hegel's works into English have all wrestled with the problems involved in the word "Geist," and it has been variously translated as "mind" or as "spirit." J. B. Baillie in translating "Geist" of the Phänomenologie des Geistes generally uses "mind" up to the last sections of the book and thereafter he uses "spirit." "Geist," he suggests, signifies mind, but at the level realized in religion and absolute idea, it is mind attaining its highest significance and is therefore Spirit. William Wallace, the

such both the human mind and the Divine Mind. The two are, however, not finally separated for Hegel but are one in the basic unity suggested by his use of "Geist." This double meaning of the word "Geist" is the key to Hegel's system. It represents Hegel's solution to the problem of unity and wholeness, since, in this concept of Geist, is expressed a fundamental unity of the divine and human mind. Geist signifies the oneness of the whole realm of idea--of reason which is objectified in nature and in the human mind, and reason which is the final unifying principle of all reality.

After the Phenomenology of Spirit, Science of Logic (1812-1816) was the next major work published by Hegel. As the presentation of the self-determining system or science of idea, Science of Logic serves Hegel's thought as its metaphysical statement. When his system reached its full expression in The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1817, 1827, and 1830), Hegel made the material of the Science of Logic the first part of his consideration of the idea. Thus the position assigned to The Logic in the arrangement of The Encyclopaedia is

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translator of the first and last parts of Hegel's Encyclopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften, translates "Geist" as "mind" throughout, because, as he sees the connotations of the English words, the word "spirit" suggests specifically to the English mind the realm of religion, and while the word does have religious meaning, the total force of Hegel's thought is to give religion only a role in the unity of the whole realm of idea. G. W. F. Hegel, Philosophy of Mind, translated from The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences by William Wallace (Oxford, 1894), p. 37.

indicative of the character of Hegel's metaphysical system. There is little doubt that as Hegel is the inheritor so he is the perfecter of the claim first advanced by the Greek philosopher Anaxagoras that *Nous* or mind is the world ordering spirit and the first principle of reality. The significance attached to mind in this sense represents, according to Hegel, "the ancient saying that '*νοῦς* governs the world,' or by our own phrase that 'Reason is in the world': which means that Reason is the soul of the world it inhabits, its immanent principle, its most proper and inward nature, its universal."[15]

Thus the first principle of Hegel's epistemology, the principle represented in the concept of *Geist* as the unity in separation and union, becomes the basis for his ontology. Logic and metaphysics are really inseparable in the Hegelian viewpoint, for the structure, that is, the content and process, of knowing is indistinguishable from the structure of being; and logical thought expresses the essential reality of things.

Reason (*Vernunft*) is the actuality (the union of essence and existence) of *Geist*; it is mind realized and realizing itself in notion (*Begriff*).[16] *Geist* as Absolute Spirit and as

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[15] G. W. F. Hegel, *The Logic*, translated from *The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* by William Wallace (Oxford, 1892), p. 46.

[16] Notion (*Begriff*) represents the content and process of reason (*Vernunft*) and as such is to be contrasted with general concepts derived from sense and with formal axioms or abstract universals. Notion is idea as self-determining and active. J. B. Baillie, in his "Translator's Introduction" to

finite mind has, as its substantial character, reason and notion, and, in this character, it is only to be grasped in terms of the content and process of Hegel's system as a whole. In this system _Geist_ or mind is displayed as the idea-in-itself, that is, as the self-determining idea of _The Logic_. As nature, _Geist_ is the objectification or otherness of mind; and, as conscious mind, it is reason come back to itself, in its consciousness in-and-for-itself. Reason is not simply descriptive of a quality of mind, it is mind; the content and self-determining process of the idea is the very being of mind. For Hegel there is no "thinking thing" beyond idea which conjures up ideas. Accordingly, reason and its content or notions are mind. Reason is also not simply descriptive of the Absolute Spirit; it is the actuality of Mind as Absolute Spirit. Nothing is outside of reason; nothing is separated from the content and the process of the reason, which is the actuality of mind. Although mind can be distinguished in Hegel's analysis into Mind as Absolute Spirit and mind as the activity and being of man, Mind is not to be regarded as ultimately

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Hegel's _The Phenomenology of Mind_ (London, 1949), describes the Hegelian use of "notion" in the following manner: "It is the ultimate principle controlling and penetrating all thought wherever it appears, whether in sensation, perception, or abstract reflection. It is the universal, but is a concrete universal, that is, holds within itself the particular and is the organic unity of universality and particularity. It is the single identity in and through difference" (pp. 21-22). The _Science of Logic_ presents specific notions as the manifestations of reason and develops "notion" as self-determining idea in an organic, self-contained system.

separated into the infinite and finite, but is one. "The knowledge of the Mind," Hegel declares, "is . . . the most 'concrete' of sciences."[17] By this he means the knowledge of Mind is the most complete and comprehensive science for it involves the whole of reality.

The metaphysical bifurcation of reality into reason and existence, or thought and being, generally involves, Hegel states, the assumption that ideas lack being or that some being, somehow, has its reality as self-grounded and independent of thought. Ideas are, therefore, regarded as being simply matters of form or "mere concepts," and, with this, it is implied that they have a significance only in abstraction from the real. For Hegel, conversely, philosophy, the science of the idea, has to do with the rational, with ideas, but not with what are erroneously termed "*mere* concepts." Hegel declares in his *Philosophy of Right*--

> On the contrary, it [philosophy] exposes such concepts as one-sided and false, while showing at the same time that it is the concept alone (not the mere abstract category of the understanding which we often hear called by the name) which has actuality, and further that it gives this actuality to itself.[18]

Accordingly, the rational notions of *The Logic* of Hegel are

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[17] *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 3.

[18] G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford, 1945), p. 14.

not lifeless abstractions, rather, they _are_ the real; they are not simply matters of form with no real content, but "on the contrary they really are, as forms of the notion, the vital spirit of the actual world. That only is true of the actual which is true in virtue of these forms, through them and in them."[19]

Philosophy, in its task of exploring the rational, does not deal with a realm of idea separated from reality, not with an abstract, empty ratiocination; philosophy is rather the comprehension of what _is_, "_for what is, is reason_."[20] This line of thought provides the setting in the _Philosophy of Right_ for the famous Hegelian dictum:

> Was vernünftig ist, das ist wirklich;
> und was wirklich ist, das ist vernünftig.[21]

The content of philosophy "was produced and develops itself in the sphere of living mind [_im Gebiete des lebendigen Geistes_] . . . the outer and inner world of consciousness--its content is reality."[22] Philosophy thus aims at the harmony of the

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[19] _The Logic_, p. 291.

[20] G. W. F. Hegel, _Sämtliche Werke_, bd. VII, _Philosophie des Rechts_, hrsg. Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart, 1928), p. 35. (Italics mine.) Unless otherwise noted, further references to _Sämtliche Werke_ are to this edition.

[21] _Ibid._, p. 33.

[22] _Werke_, bd. VIII, _System der Philosophie_, p. 47.

realm of actuality and speculative knowing, the reconciliation of self-conscious reason with the living reason of actuality.

Before the significance of the dictum--"What is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational"--can be fully appreciated, it is necessary to examine the meaning of the word "actual" in Hegel's system. Common experience and linguistic usage refer every event or existent to the realm of the actual or immediately given brute datum. But for Hegel the assigning of actuality to fortuitously existing thing or chance event is not a valid assignment of terms. The content of philosophy is "actuality" which Hegel designates as the sphere of the living spirit, the self-produced world of inner and outer consciousness. In contrast to this self-determined, self-determining process, actuality, as generally understood, refers to the finite, that is, to what is determined by another, and to what is limited, that is, to what is limited by something outside itself. This is the realm of appearance, which is, in Hegel's mind, the realm of the fortuitous and contingent, that which has but the value of something possible--something which may or may not be.

The proposition--"What is actual is rational"--does not absolutize the merely existent. That which is truly existent is, for Hegel, ". . . in part appearance, and only in part is actuality."[23] The actual is not what simply exists as given

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[23] Ibid., p. 48.

or not given but what exists necessarily as determined by itself. The actual is not simply what is, but what is as the union of essence and existence. This use of "actual," Hegel suggests, may be illustrated by the use of the term "real" when "real" is used to designate what is regarded as a valid and true actuality--an actualized essence. Thus, for example, a "real" philosopher in this sense would describe one who is actually a lover of wisdom, or, to express this thought in another way, one who is determined by his essential nature to be what he is. To warrant the characterization "real," the subject must represent the fusing of the essential and existential nature; for "real" or "actual" in this sense is the self-determination of essence in existence.

All that is finite is limited by another and thus involves contingency and untruth; the instances of finiteness ". . . have a notion and an existence, but their existence does not meet the requirements of the notion."[24] Hegel, it should be noted, was concerned with the real or actual as commonly conceived in that his thought and writings dealt with what may be described as actually existent minds, events, things; but this realm of actual existence, as commonly conceived, is, for Hegel, imperfect and limited by virtue of the fact of external determination or determination by another. Only as these actualities represent the full circle of the

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[24] The Logic, p. 52.

return of the idea to itself are they the realm of the actual in the Hegelian sense; through this process, the finite is elevated to the infinite, or, in other words, it is self-determined existent actuality.

The existent empirical realm is, for Hegel, an abstraction, for it is finite or limited being. Only as the objectification, the otherness of idea, does the natural order possess being. In a sense, it has a valid existence for Hegel, but simply as the necessary negative moment of the dialectical process, the otherness of idea. It is received by mind according to the categories of the rational consciousness, which, in Hegelian usage, are the fundamental and necessary conceptions under which all reality must be thought, the pure universals contained within Science of Logic. The natural order is not in itself actual. Nature, the objective empirical realm, is only actual as reason is consciously united with nature by mind effecting a conjunction of reason and existence.

Correspondingly, the pure notions or categories of Science of Logic, even in their full development from "Being" to "Absolute Idea," while logically existent and even actual as reason, are imperfect and incomplete and are not actual in the strict sense implied in the judgment--"What is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational." Science of Logic is the science of the idea-in-itself; and the idea-in-itself, though it is the essence of reason, is not its actuality. The idea is only actual in mind. It is actual only in being the

idea-in-and-for-itself, the idea objectified in the mind that is the self-conscious realization of idea. This is the idea-in-itself become conscious of itself in mind as reason, as concrete, universal, Absolute.

The phrases--"in-itself" (*an sich*), "for-itself" (*für sich*), "in-and-for-itself" (*an und für sich*)--express in a most succinct form the Hegelian analysis of reality. These phrases are interpreted by the commentators and translators of Hegel's thought in terms of the distinction represented by the terms "implicit" and "explicit." Generally, what is "in-itself" is regarded as implicit, potential, latent. What is "for-itself" is regarded as explicit, actual. The difficulty involved in this interpretation is the problem of how to distinguish "for-itself" from the final designation--"in-and-for-itself." Admittedly, the way Hegel uses the phrases often blurs the distinction; but the phrase "in-and-for-itself" and variants from it are repeatedly used by Hegel as the description of Absolute Knowledge, mind conscious of itself as Absolute Mind.

The distinction between "implicit" and "explicit" accurately signalizes the Hegelian scheme of process or development, in which, what is implicitly or latently contained in the previous moment comes to explicit statement or actuality in the succeeding moment. Nothing totally new arises in the developmental process as Hegel conceives it. The transition is from the implicit to the explicit. The end is implicit in

the beginning; the end is explicitly the content of the beginning.

But the limitation of development to the idea of the progression from implicit to explicit, while it suggests the process of essential self-determination of idea in Hegel's thought, imperfectly represents the total developmental pattern. That which is in-itself, according to the Hegelian scheme, must be negated. It must become for-itself, or other than itself, to realize the perfected moment of the Absolute, which is the reunification of what has been separated in a new synthesis, the self-consciousness of Absolute Mind. The Hegelian Absolute is a process or movement from being in-itself to being in-and-for-itself, or from the abstract to the concrete. In its completed moment, the Absolute is the unity of the whole as a self-distinguished, self-determined process. It is the mediated result, which retains as its character the moments of the mediation, and, as such, it is at once process and result. Mind conscious of itself as Absolute Mind is the totality of reality. This consciousness is achieved in the process in which mind in-itself is objectified, becomes mind for-itself, and Absolute Consciousness is finally actualized, for Hegel, as Mind which is the Absolute in-and-for-itself.

With this articulation of a unified and completed whole, philosophy, Hegel believed, reached its perfect expression and attained the final aim of the science of the idea, which, for him, meant "the reconciliation of the self-conscious reason

with the existent reason . . . ."[25] This, the incarnation of reason, brings about the reconciliation, the unity, which Hegel sought. It is the unity of essence and existence, of the inner and the outer; and, ultimately, it represents, at the level of the oneness and wholeness of absolute idea, the unity of the Divine and the human. The nature of this wholeness or completeness is that of an essential unity realizing itself through the process of separation and reunion. "The truth," Hegel writes in The Phenomenology, "is the whole. The whole, however, is merely the essential nature reaching its completeness through the process of its own development."[26]

The distinctive Hegelian term for wholeness is "concrete" (konkret) which signifies in the writings of Hegel the quality of being whole, complete, unified, while still admitting the distinction and otherness of being-in-self and being-for-self. It is a unity but a unity in difference. "The absolute-concrete," for Hegel, "is mind (Geist)--notion (Begriff), in so far as it as notion exists distinguishing itself from its objectivity, which, however, notwithstanding the distinction, remains its (notion's) own."[27]

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[25] Werke, bd. VIII, System der Philosophie, pp. 47-48.

[26] G. W. F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind, trans. J. B. Baillie (London, 1949), p. 81.

[27] Werke, bd. VIII, System der Philosophie, p. 362.

The circle is thus complete. The quest for wholeness or concreteness and unity reaches its goal by actualizing what was implicitly present in the basic content of the idea of _Geist_. In its double sense of mind and Spirit, _Geist_ provides Hegel with the first principle of his system. Implicit in this first principle are the elements of the final solution. The whole idea, the unified concept of absolute Idea, is constituted by the system of the particular parts; each represents a necessary part of the whole system, of one process of mind in-itself, in the self-contained notion, objectifying itself in otherness, and returning to itself in the negation of the otherness. The truth is the whole of Mind, the concrete--the whole in interdependence and organic unity.

2. The Protest

In developing and perfecting his own system, Hegel was actively engaged in the philosophical debates of his day. His philosophy, set in its historical context, may be considered as a protest directed primarily against those systems which would deny, limit, or distort the rational knowledge of Reality. Specifically, he directed this critique against Spinoza, Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. Opposing the import of their thought, Hegel engaged in what he termed "the labor of the notion" in order to elevate mind to the knowledge of Absolute Idea. The comprehension of this concrete wholeness was the

grand purpose of his thought. And in the process of reaching for this goal, he protested against what he termed abstract, partial, limited, fragmentary interpretations of reality. "Abstract" (abstrakt) in the Hegelian terminology is the antonym of "concrete," and, as such, it suggests the taking of a part as the whole or the elevating of a one-sided or partial truth to the status of the comprehensive and complete account of reality.

a. The A Priori Method and Substance[28]

The closing years of the eighteenth century were marked by a renewed interest in the thought of Spinoza. It was perhaps not strange that Hegel should reflect some influence of Spinoza. The importance of Spinoza as a contributor and as a

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[28] The chief figure under consideration in this section is Spinoza. The problem of the relation of Hegel's thought to Spinoza, a relation which H. A. Myers in his book, The Spinoza-Hegel Paradox (Ithaca, 1944), declares is more important for the history of philosophy than the connection between Hegel and Kant, is a complex and important problem; but it is not the primary concern of this section. That there are definite affinities (Myers lists fifteen fundamental propositions which they hold in common) and, also, fundamental distinctions, is clear to any student of their works. The purpose of this section is not to compare but, rather, to point to some basic aspects of Hegel's thought by briefly examining some of his principal objections to Spinoza's system.

The succeeding sections--"Separation, subjectivism, and faith" and "Formalism"--while they deal with the thought of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, have, as they relate to the thought of these men, the same purpose as this first section.

foil for the development of Hegel's thought is evidenced by the numerous references to Spinoza in Hegel's works; but, while displaying this indebtedness, Hegel expresses an emphatic and often repeated judgment that Spinoza's philosophy is a partial and, therefore, an abstract representation of the truth.

The philosophy of Spinoza begins with the assumption that all true thought proceeds from the instruments supplied by the nature of the intellect itself.[29] As a methodological first principle, the intellect takes up this instrument and uses it to push its investigations further. Knowledge, therefore, is not acquired from a status of ignorance but from an informed status. The instruments supplied by the nature of the intellect are given true ideas. Spinoza compares the method of knowledge to that of the making of material tools.[30] Just as the shaping of tools begins with a material given by nature and proceeds to fashion other things from the given material, so also the mind starts from that which is given to it and proceeds from this given. In Spinoza's system the primary instruments of the intellect take the form of definitions. Given these definitions, certain axioms are deduced, together with their propositions and corollaries. Spinoza aspired to

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[29] Benedict de Spinoza, The Chief Works, vol. II, On the Improvement of the Understanding, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (New York, 1951), p. 12.

[30] Ibid., pp. 11-12.

derive his propositions with geometrical precision from these key assumptions or definitions.

Fundamental to all the content of Spinoza's principal work, The Ethics, is his definition of Substance as the principle of reality. "By Substance, I mean," Spinoza writes, "that which is in itself and is conceived through itself: in other words, that of which a conception can be formed independently of any other conception."[31] This a priori definition is the cornerstone of his metaphysical system. The essential quality of Substance is conveyed by the designation "Self-caused." Substance by its very nature determines itself; its existence is included in its essence.[32] Spinoza does not argue for the reality of Substance but presents it as the first principle of clear thought. Substance is "conceived through itself." There is nothing beyond Substance, nothing separated from Substance, by which it is to be explained or understood. Substance is self-caused, self-contained, self-explanatory; it is that which is in itself.

Substance is one, and its nature involves singularity, simplicity, coherence. To suggest that there could be two Substances is a logical absurdity in the judgment of Spinoza. All that is, is Substance and the modification of Substance.

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31. The Chief Works, vol. II, The Ethics, p. 45.

32. Spinoza uses "essence" to designate that which if it is given the thing under consideration is also given, or if denied, the thing also is denied.

Spinoza insists on the oneness, the absolute unity, of all Reality. Substance, as synonymous with Nature, is viewed under two aspects: it is viewed as active (*Natura naturans*) and, as such, is cause of itself, unconditioned, infinite and eternal; it is also viewed as passive (*Natura naturata*) and as such is caused by another, limited, conditioned. Nature viewed as passive includes all that follows from nature viewed as active--all the modifications of *Natura naturans*. But whichever perspective is taken, Nature is still one. Whatsoever is, is Substance, and without Substance nothing can be or be conceived.[33] This proposition articulates Spinoza's complete and absolute monism. Substance encloses all reality, and the relation of all else to Substance is that of modifications of Substance. The many are not parts or segments of the one, if by these terms is meant that which is separate or distinct; rather, the many are modes of Substance, and as modes, they are integral particulars, attributes, of the One.

Spinoza's method leads necessarily, Hegel claims, to an abstraction from Reality, for it seeks to establish the real and the true by a priori definitions in themselves. Hegel repudiates the a priori as the method of philosophy and insists that "this pure consciousness of Absolute Being" is isolated in itself and produces an abstraction separated from all otherness, all negation. It is "a consciousness in

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[33] *Ibid*., p. 55.

estrangement"[34]--the simple, immediate reflection of mind into itself--that is, mind estranged from the concrete whole. Hegel contends that the true method is the dialectical method, which, in his view, stands in fundamental contrast to the method of Spinoza. The Hegelian method is structured and moves on the basis of opposition or negation. Spinoza's method, on the contrary, does not permit the negation of Substance, and therefore otherness, to be operative with reference to its first principle. Substance in Spinoza's thought, then, remains "abstract," "in-itself," and is unrelated to the whole of reality. Spinoza's logic cannot adequately, therefore, reveal the unity in opposition characteristic of reality. Spinoza's method of pure thought is subject to the limitation of idea-in-itself. It is the abstraction of pure idea; it is, as Hegel characterizes it, acosmic idealism; it is, therefore, incomplete, untrue. By contrast, the dialectical method, according to Hegel, is the realization of the concrete content of Idea in its other, its antithesis.

By his protest against the abstract universality of Idea in-itself, Hegel establishes his own view of the real and the true as the process of objectification and reunion. Hegel argues that Substance, the primal reality of Idea, is the essential prius of all else, but Absolute Reality is only as it is in its other, its negation.

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[34] The Phenomenology, p. 551.

Reality for Hegel is the process of the whole, and thus essentially partakes of the dialectical method. Even the Idea of The Logic, in its self-movement to the concrete absolute Idea, illustrates the essential role of the other in realizing Idea. It is Hegel's contention that the role of negation is essential to the concrete structure of reality. Nature, as the objectification of mind in organic and inorganic matter; history, as mind realizing itself in the state; religion, as mind objectifying itself in positive religions; ethics, as mind establishing itself in institutions; and mind itself, as reason objectifying itself in consciousness; all are the existential moments (the objectification) of the actual, the actualizing of Idea. Without them, Idea is unreal. In this manner, Hegel, throughout the whole of his thought, insists upon the objectification of Idea in history, in institutions, in religion, and in consciousness as indispensable to the actuality of Absolute Idea.

What is ultimately real for Spinoza is Substance or the first principle in itself; and the whole of reality is to be considered in terms of Substance and its modes. What is other than Substance is simply a mode of Substance and is unessential to its being. The modes follow from substance-in-itself as an implication proceeds from a premise--not as actually essential to the concept. The modes may represent the manifestation of Substance, but they are not required for its "actualization." What is, is ultimately in itself and is to be conceived

through itself. Spinoza's definition of ultimate reality, in Hegel's opinion, "defrauds the principle of difference or finitude of its due."[35]

Hegel's argument is that first principles, or fundamental definitions are merely first and not the truth of being; thus, "knowledge is only real and can only be set forth fully in the form of science, in the form of system."[36] Substance, as treated by seventeenth-century rationalism, is accepted by Hegel as an essential stage in the development of the full concept of the Absolute, but only as a partial or limited form. The Absolute is in-itself, it involves the necessity of self-determination, of being cause of itself; but the Absolute as such, as simple substance, is empty of real content because it is abstract, immediate, in-itself, and is not mediated by another. Substance lacks objectification; it lacks the contrast which alone can give significance to its content:

> As intuitively accepted by Spinoza without a previous mediation by dialectic, Substance, as the universal negative power,

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[35] The Logic, p. 275. The system of Spinoza is founded upon the proposition that "God alone is," according to Hegel, and the result of his system is an "Acosmism," a denial of the world, or any positive being for the world.

[36] The Phenomenology, p. 85. The fundamental distinction here between the systems of Spinoza and Hegel roots in the distinction between formal and final cause. For Spinoza the formal cause is basic and he, in fact, denies all validity to teleology or final causes. Hegel insists that the formal cause represents simply a first principle to be realized only in terms of the final cause or end. Absolute reality is formal for Spinoza; it is finalistic for Hegel.

> is as it were a dark shapeless abyss which engulfs all definite content as radically null, and produces from itself nothing that has a positive subsistence of its own.[37]

Truth, the concrete whole of reality, is only realized for Hegel in the form of a self-contained, self-determined process realizing itself through distinction and otherness. Thus, Spinoza's simple substantive, as the Absolute, the One, is empty according to Hegel. He protests that reality is rather the One in distinction and difference, that it partakes of the nature of subject not of substance. In contrast to Spinoza's Substance, Hegel advocates subject as the essential descriptive designation of ultimate reality and states that this "is expressed in the idea which represents the Absolute as Spirit (_Geist_) . . . ."[38] To partake of the nature of "subject" in Hegelian thought, fundamentally, means to have an other, to be conscious of self in an other. In _The Ethics_ Spinoza defines cause of itself as that which cannot be conceived apart from existence, and then applies this definition to Substance, but when he has thus applied it, he exhausts the actual content he gives to Substance in itself. Hegel defines Mind (_Geist_) as cause of itself, as necessarily or self-determinately existing; but Hegel views this cause of itself as subject, as Mind or Spirit conceiving itself in mind. Thus subject essentially

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[37] _The Logic_, p. 276.

[38] _The Phenomenology_, p. 85.

represents, as substance does not, the nature of reality as Absolute Idea, not merely in-itself, but in-and-for-itself.

b. Separation, Subjectivism, and Faith

Hegel contrasts his own philosophy with that of Kant on the basis of the distinction between absolute idealism and subjective idealism,[39] and he charges Kantian philosophy with being an abstract, partial expression of the truth. For both Hegel and Kant the objective realm is known through the forms of the subjective apperception and the categories of the understanding, but Hegel protests that Kant restricts this knowledge to the realm of the subject's experience and thus fails to see that the categories are themselves the essence of phenomenal and noumenal reality. The totality of being and the notions by which being is known are one; subject and object are united in mind. For Hegel, mind (_Geist_) is the only reality:

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[39] The basic significance of this distinction underlies the whole of Hegel's thought, and it is explicitly stated in a number of passages in Hegel's works, as for example: "The things of which we have direct consciousness are mere phenomena, not for us only, but in their own nature; and the true and proper case of these things, finite as they are, is to have their existence founded not in themselves but in the universal divine Idea. This view of things, it is true, is as idealistic as Kant's; but in contradistinction to the subjective idealism of the Critical philosophy should be termed absolute idealism" (_The Logic_, pp. 93-94).

> It is the inner being of the world, that which essentially is, and is *per se*; it assumes objectivity, determinate form and enters into relation with itself--it is externality (otherness), and exists for self; yet, in this determination, and in its otherness, it is still one with itself--it is self-contained and self-complete, in itself and for itself at once.[40]

It is the considered judgment of Hegel that Kant makes the fundamental mistake of accepting the starting point and preliminary level in the development of consciousness, or the phenomenology of mind, as the whole and final activity of mind, and thus so delimits knowledge and so abstracts from the real concrete whole of mind, that mind, for Kant, can attain only the levels of sensuous consciousness and the categories or subjective forms of the understanding. What is taken to be the limit of intellectual activity is the superficial knowledge of appearances and what is intrinsically individual. The conclusion which follows is that no connected rational relation between phenomena and the Ultimate or the Real is possible.

In an essay entitled *Glauben und Wissen*,[41] published in the year 1802, Hegel engaged in an extended critique of what he termed the "faith philosophy" of Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte.

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[40] *The Phenomenology*, p. 86.

[41] G. W. F. Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, bd. I, *Erste Druckschriften*, hrsg. Georg Lasson (Leipzig, 1928), pp. 222-346. This essay first appeared in *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*, bd. II, St. I (1802). This journal was edited by Hegel and Schelling for a brief period while they were together at the University of Jena.

He so termed them "faith" philosophers because of their adjudged limitation of knowledge to the order of subjective apperception and the attendant divorcement of Ultimate Reality from knowledge. The basis for assurance of a relation to Ultimate Reality, since knowledge was ruled out, became faith.

This denial of the possibility of knowledge of the Ultimate and this espousal of faith as the way of approach to Reality signalized, Hegel was convinced, epistemological nihilism. The faith philosophers, Hegel protested, isolate the immediate consciousness in itself; and by this abstraction from reality they separate the Ultimate and the Real from the mind. Even while seeking to establish the reality of knowledge, they deny the knowledge of reality. According to Kant, in the words of Hegel, "that which is above sense (Übersinnliches) cannot be known by reason; the highest idea does not have at the same time reality."[42] For Fichte, the ultimate is "inconceivable and unthinkable; knowledge knows nothing other than that it knows nothing and must itself flee to faith."[43] Hegel protested against what he conceived to be the paradox that the Real and the True is what cannot be known and against the emptiness of what remains. He argued that the flight to faith is a flight to what is nihil for reason.

This unnecessary circumscription of knowledge, Hegel concludes, is the result of the activity of understanding

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[42] Ibid., p. 224.

[43] Ibid.

(Verstand) disjoined from reason (Vernunft). The understanding, as Hegel describes it, observes, categorizes and views the objective in the distinct, separated concepts of the reflective intelligence. Mind, as this delimited activity, is an early stage of the development of idea. Reason, by contrast, is the concrete activity of mind in synthesizing, uniting opposites, and rising above the isolation, self-identity, of the categories of the understanding in themselves. Reason is the actuality of mind and the rationale of reality.

Mind includes, as essential to its being, the activity of negation undertaken by the understanding in transmuting the simple through the process of forming determinate distinctions; but mind is not limited to this activity of the understanding. Mind is reason, and, as reason, it is the movement, the process, which is "the Absolute Method of knowledge and at the same time the immanent soul of the Content of knowledge."[44] There is nothing hidden from the power of reason, nothing separated finally from the rational activity of mind, for the rational is the real.

The development of mind revealed in the activity of the understanding gives rise, in the first place, to the separation of concepts, or what Hegel terms "either-or" thinking; and "the battle of reason," in other words, the task of Hegel's

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[44] G. W. F. Hegel, Science of Logic, trans. W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers (London, 1929), I, 36-37.

own philosophy, "is the struggle to break up the rigidity to which the understanding has reduced everything."[45] The understanding operates on the maxim of the excluded middle, a maxim which, while true for the understanding, is false or abstract for reason. Understanding in its dogmatism consists in "the tenacity which draws a hard and fast line between certain terms and others opposite to them . . . . the strict 'Either-or': for instance, The world is either finite or infinite; but one of these two it must be."[46]

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[45] The Logic, p. 67.

[46] Ibid., pp. 66-67. The phrase "either-or" immediately suggests an association with the title of a famous work by Kierkegaard. It is at least likely that Kierkegaard selected the title, and he most certainly developed the theme, in direct dialogue with Hegelian thought. It was precisely the lack of decisiveness suggested by either-or that Kierkegaard charged against Hegel.

In his principal anti-Hegelian treatise, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, Kierkegaard did suggest that, in the sphere of abstraction, Hegel's point is valid, even against his own system:

"Hegel is utterly and absolutely right in asserting that viewed eternally, sub specie aeterni, in the language of abstraction, in pure thought and pure being, there is no either/or. How in the world could there be, when abstract thought has taken away the contradiction, so that Hegel and the Hegelians ought rather be asked to explain what they mean by the hocus-pocus of introducing contradiction, movement, transition, and so forth, into the domain of logic" (Søren Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, trans. David F. Swenson [Princeton, 1941], p. 270).

But, having examined Hegel's position in the rarified air of abstractionism, Kierkegaard insists that this is not the air the living man breathes. He continues his remarks:

"Like the giant who wrestled with Hercules, and lost strength as soon as he was lifted from the ground, the either/or of the contradiction is ipso facto nullified when it is lifted out of the existential and introduced into the eternity of abstract thought. On the other hand, Hegel is equally

The positive statement of Hegel's protest against the separation inherent in the "either-or" thinking of Kant and Fichte is his characteristic insistence upon the speculative power of reason to unite opposites. This power is predicated in the proposition essential to Hegel's dialectical method: "Everything is opposite." Concepts partake of the nature of the dialectical for Hegel. It is his conviction that, "neither in heaven nor in earth, neither in the world of mind nor of nature, is there anywhere such an abstract 'Either-or' as the understanding maintains. Whatever exists is concrete, with difference and opposition in itself."[47]

Hegel illustrates his point by an analogy with a magnet. The poles of a magnet are of the nature of its being. If a magnet is cut in two the result is not the separation of the two poles but the creation of a new set of opposites in which each is opposed, not by just any other pole, but by its own other. Concrete or speculative thought involves negation as essentially in its nature as the magnet involves the negation or opposition of the two poles. Contradiction or negation is the moving principle of thought and reality. In The Phenomenology, Hegel states that "it is the diremption of negativity

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wrong when, forgetting the abstraction of his thought, he plunges down into the real of existence to annul the double aut with might and main. It is impossible to do this in existence, for in so doing the thinker abrogates existence as well" (ibid., pp. 270-271).

[47] The Logic, p. 223.

which constitutes the notion."[48] By this process, that is, the negation of self-existence in simple self-identity or abstract universality, the self-determining content of the idea comes to light. The opposites--for example, finite and infinite, thought and being--are not absolute opposites but poles of thought, and each is opposed by its other. The negative[49] of the dialectic is "the simple point of negative self-relation, the innermost source of all activity, of living spiritual self-movement, the dialectic soul which all truth has in it and through which it alone is truth . . . ."[50] Thus Hegel, in making his protest against the separation of opposites or the "either-or" thinking of the categories of the understanding, advocates the negation of the negative, or the synthesis of opposites in the activity of the concrete, self-opposing, self-determining idea.

The ultimate separation of the "faith" philosophers, the opposition of the finite and the infinite, is repudiated by Hegel. The finite is regarded by Hegel as being an essential moment of the infinite--its other. The power of mind is not humbled in absolute idealism, as it is in the critical

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[48] The Phenomenology, p. 796.

[49] "Aufheben," the word Hegel uses to signify the process of negation, has a double meaning: (1) to clear away or annul; (2) to keep or preserve. (The Logic, p. 180.) It has the idea of transcending while still preserving what is transcended. (Science of Logic, I, 119-120.)

[50] Science of Logic, II, 477.

philosophy with its sharp delimitation of the realm of knowledge, for there is no ultimate separation of the finite and the infinite in the Hegelian system. Hegel looks with despair upon subjective idealism's closing of the finite in itself. "We must," he declares, "free ourselves from the Schreckbild of the opposition of the finite and the infinite."[51]

The Absolute is not to be considered as a "goal" which may be approached but which remains a something "beyond." Rather, Hegel maintains, Reality is Mind as Idea dividing and distinguishing itself, subjective and objective, finite and infinite in itself. This position is advanced by Hegel in opposition to the Kantian separation of a "transcendental object" or "noumenon" as a pure negative established in the analysis of the limitations inherent in the very finitude of the knowing process. Fichte, Hegel charges, followed Kant in the containment of knowledge within the finite. Fichte translated Kant's "transcendental object" into an "absolute ego" but finally concluded that all we can know is the finite ego since the infinite ego is a reality outside the realm of experience. Hegel labors to overcome this separation of the "transcendental object" and to defend the rational knowledge of the Absolute. He insists that all oppositions which are fixed, for example, the finite and the infinite, are opposed not on the basis of

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51. Werke, bd. XV, Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion, pp. 210-211.

external distinctions but by their intrinsic and polar significance. They are ". . . transitions in and for themselves."[52] With this process of reasoning, Hegel seeks to bring the finite into the infinite as its negative moment, and, by this means, to establish the finite as an essential moment of the infinite. The basic insistence in the argument of Hegel for reunion of finite and infinite is the proposition that the "noumenon" or "absolute ego" is not an empty oneness over against rational activity but is itself the Absolute Idea, Reason realized in-and-for-itself, the connected, self-determined whole of the rational activity of Mind. The next point is the insistence that the Absolute is not simply known or recognized by reason; the Absolute is in fact only actual and real in the concrete phenomenology of mind.

The Hegelian protest against the separation of the finite and the infinite is one with his protest against subjectivism. The Kantian view of the understanding, as the level of mind attained in the Critical philosophy, necessarily involves subjectivism. For it is assumed that what is known by the understanding is not the object as it really is but the object refracted through the sensuous determinations and the distinctions of the reflective processes of the individual. What is known is the unity of apperception and not the thing.

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[52] Science of Logic, II, 475.

The Kantian philosophy in "its highest idea," Hegel objects--

> is the complete emptiness of the subjectivity or the inviolability of the infinite concept, which at the same time, in the sphere of the understanding, is posited as the objective. . . . the true idea remains an absolute subjective maxim, in part for reflection and in part for faith, but not for the medium of knowledge and reason.[53]

Hegel charges Fichte with an empty, tautological subjectivism which can be reduced to the simple formula "I equals I." Fichte's ego does not involve the experience or perception of things in themselves but only perceives experience and the act of perception. This simple, empty, free act of the subject is the first and only certainty and is nothing more than absolute, self-contained self-identity. This willensakt negates the objective world, and leaves the subject shut up in itself.[54] Subjective idealism, says Hegel, condemns itself--

> knowingly and voluntarily to being an untrue kind of knowledge, and cannot get away from 'meaning' and 'perceiving', which for it have no truth at all. It falls into a direct contradiction; it asserts that the real has a twofold nature, consists of elements in sheer opposition, is the unity of apperception and a 'thing' as well; whether a thing is an alien impact, or an empirical entity, or sensibility, or the 'thing in itself', it remains in principle precisely the same, viz. something external and foreign to that unity.[55]

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[53] Werke, bd. I, Erste Druckschriften, hrsg. Lasson, p. 262.

[54] Ibid., p. 316.

[55] The Phenomenology, p. 280.

The contradiction of subjective idealism, Hegel asserts, is the result of the limited concept of mind which it affirms to be the final truth. The contrast he draws is between this concept of mind and the concrete rational Mind regarded as the Ultimate Reality. As particular, finite mind is not yet explicitly the concrete truth, but it does admit of this possibility. The realization of the Absolute Idea is accomplished through the mind's developing consciousness of its own concrete nature. Mind at its first stages is immediate, and at its later stages is mediate. Mind as immediate is reason aware of itself in consciousness and in reflection upon the categories. Mind as mediate is Reason as object of itself in mind and for mind. At this level, the level of Absolute Idea, Mind rises above the subjectivism of the Critical philosophy and its dichotomy of subject and object to the unity of opposites in itself. It evinces its own concrete, all-embracing nature as Absolute Spirit or Mind. Spirit in this sense is Hegel's rebuttal to Kant's "transcendental object," for, unlike Kant's ultimate, Spirit is not separated from mind in man. It is subjective-objective, the self-determining ground of all intelligence and the life giving whole of reality.

The negative metaphysical result of subjective idealism is in part resisted by Kant and Fichte through assigning to faith the role of relating the subject to the Absolute in Itself. All three of the men linked together by Hegel as "faith" philosophers in Glauben und Wissen agree, he charges, in

stating as their fundamental position: "the Absolute is theirs alone in faith, not in knowledge."[56] Reasons suggestive for the advance of faith to the Absolute may be offered, but the actual appeal is to an immediate experience of the individual. In Hegel's view, the position of the "faith" philosophers is "the quintessence of shallow thinking." The true and absolute reality is reached by them not through thought and concept but by the willful leap of the individual to what is considered to be beyond the reach of the rational activity of mind.

If faith is the only basis for a cognitive relation with the Real, that is, faith as subjective conviction, then, Hegel argues, the particular is invested in itself with the character of an absolute and the final result of the subjective idealism is that "I as this particular unit actually here, am alone the affirmative, and am what has absolute Being. . . . I, this finite, am the infinite."[57]

Hegel objects to the form and the content of faith as being imperfect and abstract. Its form is objectionable to him because of its character of immediacy, which, according to Hegel, is altogether abstract immediacy and carries the significance of "an abstract reference-to-self, that is, an abstract

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[56] Werke, bd. I, Erste Druckschriften, hrsg. Lasson, p. 326.

[57] Philosophy of Religion, I, 189.

identity or abstract universality."[58] Only what is mediate, reflected in its other, is concrete and true for Hegel. The content of the faith relations is objectionable to Hegel because its object is no better than an indefinable other over against the finite. The ultimate of faith is essentially without content or determinate quality. It exists, Hegel charges, as a something separated, cut off from mind.

When the relation of faith is the only contact with the Ultimate and the Infinite is set over against or separated from the finite, then, protests Hegel, the Absolute is nothing; the finite, as so limited, knows only itself, its experiences, its will or imperative. The pure abstraction of the Infinite as the abyss of nothing is a type of philosophical Good Friday in the history of the idea, the moment of "infinite sorrow," because with this development the Absolute is negated. That which beforehand, Hegel writes, was represented in historical pictures and feeling is with this stage in the history of thought expressed in idea. The significance for both is the same--"God himself is dead!"[59]

The philosophy of Kant and Fichte as the absolutizing of subjectivity, as "faith philosophy," has validity as the negative moment in the realization of the absolute idea and is to

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[58] *The Logic*, p. 138.

[59] *Werke*, bd. I, *Erste Druckschriften*, hrsg. Lasson, p. 345.

be regarded as the negative moment in the phenomenology of mind. The synthesis moving from this negative moment is the realization in mind of the Absolute Idea, or, in terms of the historical pictures of religion, the resurrection of God from the dead, and the day of resurrection dawns for Hegel with the method and essential content of his own philosophy.

c. Formalism

Hegel was closely allied with Schelling during the early years of his career as a university teacher. When Hegel joined the faculty of the University of Jena in 1801, Schelling, though several years younger than Hegel, was already a figure of importance in the philosophical discussions of the day. Hegel at first was known as a disciple of Schelling, and the two men shared for a brief time the task of editing the *Critical Journal of Philosophy*.[60] But with their growing awareness of the conflicts existing in their systems, the two men were driven apart, and the period of intellectual compatibility was followed by a period of philosophical and personal animosity and bitterness.

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[60] Hegel and Schelling were co-editors of *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie* from 1802 to 1804. When Schelling left the University of Jena in 1803 the *Journal* soon ceased. The articles which appeared in the *Journal* were unsigned; perhaps this was done to indicate, as Edward Caird suggests, the unity of spirit in the authors. Edward Caird, *Hegel* (Philadelphia, 1896), p. 53.

The change in their relations paralleled the development of Schelling's thought in the direction of an acceptance of objectivity as distinct, cut off from subjectivity and consciousness. The harmony of the early period had been a result of their common answer to the problem of reconciling subjectivity and objectivity. In this early period, both men accepted mind as the ultimate principle of reality and they both held that being and thought were united in mind. But Schelling was not satisfied with the union of the rational and the real. *Of Human Freedom* (1809)[61] and *The Ages of the World*[62] gave expression to his reaction against the determinateness of absolute idealism and advanced, in contradistinction to the rational, a principle of freedom. In the later full expression of his system, Schelling rejected the rational dialectic for what may be called an "existential dialectic."[63] Schelling came to regard consciousness as the result of a process of development in nature, and the Absolute acquired in his thought the character of a ground beyond with the negative connotations of an abyss (*Abgrund*).

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[61] F. W. J. Schelling, *Of Human Freedom*, trans. James Gutmann (Chicago, 1936).

[62] F. W. J. Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, trans. Frederick de Wolfe Bolman, Jr. (New York, 1942). This work was written around 1811 but was not published until after Schelling's death in 1854.

[63] "Introduction," *ibid.*, p. 5 *et passim*.

While the final clash between the two systems is brought out by the contrast of Hegel's thought with these developments, the fundamental conflict between the two men antedates the later expressions of Schelling's thought and is, in fact, implicit in Schelling's understanding of absolute idealism. In his early development, the ultimate principle for Schelling is represented in Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie (1801) as an absolute identity, that is, an ultimate principle which is to be expressed in terms of an indifference to subject-object distinction, a creative, absolute principle in-itself, an absolute one, "identity of identity," or "absolute identity." In contrast, the ultimate principle of reality, as Hegel articulated it, is not absolute identity but Absolute Idea; and it is expressed in terms of mind determined in-itself and determining itself in its other.

Hegel at first accepted the principle of absolute identity as an expression of the unity belonging to the essence of reality, but before long he recognized the conflict of this principle with his own. The "Preface" to The Phenomenology of Mind (1807) is marked by unrestrained scorn for the principle of absolute identity. Hegel refers to the system of Schelling as being "one of indistinct formalism (ein einfärbiger Formalismus),"[64] and he protests against the abstraction, the indefiniteness, the vagueness of the merely formal Absolute

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[64] Werke, bd. II, Phänomenologie des Geistes, p. 21.

implicit in the principle of identity. The contempt of Hegel for Schelling is evinced in a famous passage from The Phenomenology in which Hegel writes that the abstract identity involved in the assertion "'in the Absolute all is one'" represents its Absolute as "the night in which, as we say, all cows are black."[65] Schelling's Ultimate is, according to Hegel, nothing more than an envisioned something, without distinction or otherness, and, therefore, essentially without significance.

For Hegel everything depends on the ultimate being grasped and expressed in terms not of an absolute substantive union, an absolute one or identity, but as subject. Both Schelling and Hegel sought for a reconciliation of opposites in a unity. But Schelling achieved his reconciliation, Hegel believed, by a leap beyond distinction to an intuited unity or identity principle. The issue, as Hegel understood it, is not to unite nature as a separated Absolute and the ego, but to unite the infinite and finite Geist. The reconciliation accomplished by Hegel in his system, a reconciliation which is in accord with the nature of the problem as Hegel understood it, is a completed unity, but one which involves identity in distinction, a unity of separation and union. The Absolute is for Hegel not a primal unity, not an immediately intuited unity as such, but is subject. It is "truly realized and actual (wirklich) solely in the process of positing itself, or in mediating with

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[65] The Phenomenology, p. 79.

its own self its transitions from one state or position to the opposite."[66] The Hegelian system presents an Absolute which, in contradistinction to the formal, substantial ground or abyss, is subject, and, as such, is to be grasped not by the negation of the intelligible but in the actuality of mind--in the clear, distinct, determined activity of reason.

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[66] Ibid., p. 80.

Chapter II

RELIGION, RELIGIONS, AND THE ABSOLUTE RELIGION

The discussion of religion, as Hegel develops the subject, falls into three broad divisions: first, the idea, or conception (Begriff), of religion; secondly, definite, determined (bestimmte) religion, that is, the moments of the process of the objectification of the idea of religion in positive, historical religions; finally, the synthesis of essence and existence in the absolute religion. Each of the three are dealt with in the analysis which follows. The last section introduces the central theme of this study of Hegelian thought--the Christian religion as the absolute and perfect religion.

1. Religion

In The Phenomenology of Mind, Hegel describes the three principal moments of the development of Mind as consciousness,

self-consciousness, reason, or mind conscious of itself as Absolute Mind. The analysis of the final part of _The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences_, _Philosophy of Mind_, involves the consideration of subjective mind and objective mind and culminates in the discussion of Absolute Mind. Religion, in principle and as phenomenon, belongs in the Hegelian system to the moment of Absolute Mind. Even in the most primitive form of religion as consciousness, religion represents an inchoate awareness of Spirit, because even here the essence of the religious consciousness, the union of the infinite and the finite, finds partial expression. And in its final moment, religion is a form expressing the identity in difference of divine and human natures.

a. The Sphere of Religion

In most general terms, the sphere of religion is defined by Hegel as being that of "eternal truth, of eternal rest, of eternal peace."[1] These generalities are commonplace as usually conceived, but the intricacies of Hegelian terminology give them particular significance. Religion is truth, for it represents the concrete whole; religion is rest and peace because, in the elevation of man to Spirit, that is, the union of the finite and the infinite which is the content of religion, man

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[1] _Werke_, bd. XV, _Philosophie der Religion_, p. 19.

is freed from the anxieties of particular existence and is aware of the active presence of Absolute Spirit brought into concrete reality.[2] With this advance man is first truly man; it is this that makes him man, that is, he is only truly man insofar as he is Spirit.[3] This status, which is essentially represented in religion, is the source of all spiritual or rational aspects of human existence--the ethical, political, artistic, religious, and philosophical life of man.

Religion decries the particularity of human existence and frees men for true individuality, because, in religion, man attains the highest level of consciousness, the level of spirit conscious of itself as Spirit. Thus religion has its being in the sphere of reconciliation or synthesis in which man is released from his particular self and is reconciled in the true, concrete self-consciousness of Absolute Spirit. The particularity of the self, of distinct or discrete subjectivity, is negated, and from this, the reality of religion or conscious-

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[2] Spinoza's concept of "the intellectual love of God" as the way to inner freedom or peace suggests much the same idea. In spite of the vigorous protest of Hegel against Spinoza's thought, the final results of the two systems are in fact closely parallel. Mind under the mode of eternity is, for Spinoza, knowledge of God and of being in God. Out of this form of knowledge develops "the intellectual love of God." Absolute knowledge in Hegel's thought represents the self-consciousness of Spirit as Absolute. The conclusion of Spinoza's system in The Ethics is that "the intellectual love of mind towards God is part of the infinite-love wherewith God loves himself" (Works, II, 265).

[3] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, p. 19.

ness of the Universal arises.[4]

Religion defined in terms of conscious idea is awareness of Absolute Truth. "Religion leads us," Hegel writes, "to a universal, which embraces all else within itself, to an Absolute by which all else is brought into being: and this Absolute is an object not of the senses but of the mind and of thought."[5] Defined in theological terms, the sphere of religion is the knowledge of God. But whether defined in terms of the awareness of Absolute Truth or in terms of the knowledge of God, the fundamental significance of the sphere of religion is the same: religion encloses, in the form peculiar to religion, the area of Absolute Mind or spirit conscious of itself as Spirit.

b. Absolute Mind

This is the final moment of mind, in which the antithesis of subject and object is overcome. The concrete Absolute Mind,

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[4] It is in this sense that practical reason or the moral realm represents for Hegel the basis of religion. The moral has reference in Hegelian thought to the negation of the merely particular and the realization of the true universal. It is the return of the will to its reality, the negation of the particular will and the determination of the will after the self-determined universal law, and it is, therefore, the positive moment of the negation of the negative moment of the finite particular. As such, morality is the basis of religious life: "Genuine religion and genuine religiosity only issue from the moral life: religion is that life rising to think, i.e. becoming aware of the free universality of its concrete essence" (Philosophy of Mind, p. 155).

[5] The Logic, p. 43.

spirit conscious of itself as Spirit, expresses itself in human life by the content of the modes in which the human spirit is conscious of the Absolute. These modes are art, religion, and philosophy. All three represent, to a less or more perfect degree, the abrogation of the finite as such and the reconciliation of infinite and finite. They differ only in the forms under which they present the Absolute to the human mind.

Art, the first mode, comprehends the Absolute in an immediate form. It had its origin, Hegel declares, "in the feeling of the absolute spiritual need that the Divine, the spiritual Idea, should exist as object for consciousness, and in the first place for perception in its immediate form."[6] The artist produces an external shape born of his subjective spirit, and, in this act, the material is transformed by his spirit into the ideal, into the shape and form of beauty. The function of art is not to instruct, purify, or improve, but rather "to reveal truth under the mode of art's sensuous or material configuration, to display the reconciled antithesis. . . ."[7]

Art has the form of immediacy, of externality, and thus is an imperfect expression of Absolute Mind. The representation of the idea in imaginative objectivity is imperfect in that the content and the form are divergent and ultimately

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[6] Philosophy of Religion, I, 138.

[7] G. W. F. Hegel, The Philosophy of Fine Art, trans. F. P. B. Osmaston (London, 1920), I, 77.

incongruous. At its various levels, art seeks to give expression to the Absolute in the finite. Symbolic art represents the Absolute in materials of pure abstraction; romantic art, which lies at the other extreme of the development of art, pictures the Absolute as the soul behind appearances. This latter form does not represent the Absolute in external form as such but points beyond itself to the Absolute.

In its highest moments, art proffers, according to Hegel's interpretation, the liberation of human mind from the limited form and substance of the finite and opens, by the representation of the ideal, the possibility of reconciliation with the Absolute in the immediacy of sense phenomena. Although it finds its expression in sensuous presentation, art, like religion and philosophy, has as its aim the concrete whole of Spirit:

> For the aim of all art is nothing else than that identity asserted and displayed by the human Spirit, in which the eternal, the Divine, the essential and explicated truth is unfolded in the forms and phenomenal presence of the objective world to the apprehension of our external senses and our emotional life and imagination.[8]

Religion, the second mode in which Absolute Mind is expressed in human consciousness, manifests the whole truth of self-conscious Spirit, but does so in a generalized or pictorial form. In religion the human spirit is conscious of the

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[8] Ibid., IV, 348-349.

Absolute; the union of the finite and the infinite is the very content of religion, but the structures of the religious consciousness imperfectly represent this content.

Philosophy is the highest expression of Absolute Mind. "This science," Hegel declares, "is the unity of Art and Religion."[9] Art is external in form and essentially subjective in origin; religion realizes and represents the Absolute Spirit but in a form that requires transformation. Philosophy harmonizes content and form so that the form of philosophy, conscious self-determined thought, perfectly represents its absolute content. The representation of the Absolute is thus freed from the imperfection inherent in the forms of art and religion as philosophy presents the Absolute in terms of "the self-thinking Idea, the truth aware of itself,--the logical system . . . ."[10]

According to Hegel, philosophy and religion engage in the same activity: both are occupied with the absolute, concrete Truth, and both seek after this goal as thinking spirits which participate in the Absolute Spirit. Hegel repeatedly makes the point that the object of philosophy and religion is the same; he states in The Logic that:

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9. Philosophy of Mind, p. 181.

10. Ibid., p. 196.

> In both the object is Truth, in that supreme sense in which God and God only is the Truth. Both in like manner go on to treat of the finite worlds of Nature and the human Mind, with their relation to each other and to their truth in God.[11]

This object is not separated from mind, but is the Absolute Mind as self-conscious Spirit in-and-for-itself.

The mode of philosophy is distinct in its form of representation of the Absolute Idea, and as such is the most perfect manner of comprehending the Absolute. This is true because its form, the form of notion (Begriff) is the perfect form and corresponds to the content itself.[12] The distinction between philosophy and religion turns on the contrast between the form of speculative thought or notion (Begriff) and the form of imaginative thinking (Vorstellung). Religion, Hegel declares, is the mode in which all men can receive the concrete Truth. Faith is the spirit's witness immediately in the human heart,[13] and it finds expression in the representative or imaginative thinking of religion. Philosophy is antithetical to this form of religion, and, therefore, regardless of the fact that their content or object is the same, they are distinct from one another. Philosophy replaces the form of imaginative thinking with the form of the precise, self-determined and determining notion. Religion may be prior in history as the mode in which

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[11] The Logic, p. 3.

[12] Science of Logic, II, 466.

[13] Philosophy of Mind, p. 182.

the human spirit comprehends the Absolute. This Hegel concedes, but philosophy, as the science of the Idea in-and-for-itself, is the final expression of the Absolute--"this science alone is the perfect form in which spirit truly knows itself."[14]

c. The Forms of the Religious Consciousness

Religion is the consciousness of the Absolute Spirit. This consciousness, according to Hegel's analysis, has three primary forms--feeling (Gefühl), faith (Glaube), and pictorial, representative, imaginative thinking (Vorstellung). These forms have in common the consciousness of God not simply as a being beyond but as an inner reality in their consciousness. The content for all three forms is within the spirit of man; yet this does not mean the content is only subjective. The forms each partake of the character of certainty, by which, Hegel means, the Absolute and finite are joined in the consciousness of the subject.

Religion as feeling, Hegel remarks in the early part of his Philosophy of Religion, involves the sense of satisfaction or blessedness which man experiences in being united with the Absolute. It is a partial, though highly inadequate, expression of the true relation to the Absolute. Feeling is subjective and immediate in character, and, as such, it is the

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[14] The Phenomenology, p. 801.

lowest level of consciousness of the Absolute in religion. The conviction of unity represented in the form of feeling is distinct from rational, self-determining idea and exists as subjective and private. "God is within," as a statement of immediate conviction is correct but trivial, isolated in the self.

The caustic dialogue of Hegel with his contemporary and colleague on the staff of the University of Berlin, Friedrich Schleiermacher, is apparent at the point of Hegel's evaluation of the religious consciousness in the form of feeling. Schleiermacher's two principal works, On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers (1799, 1806),[15] and The Christian Faith (1821, 1831),[16] state the priority of personal feeling in religion. In the first, Schleiermacher sought to identify the essence of religion in the encounter of the individual with his world. This produces an awareness of absolute dependence. In the second work, Schleiermacher systematically analyzed the essential content of the Christian faith. The Christian religion for Schleiermacher, as for Hegel, represents the perfecting of religious consciousness. But for Schleiermacher, in contrast with Hegel, this is an experience of the inner life

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[15] Friedrich Schleiermacher, On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers, trans. John Oman (New York, 1955).

[16] Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, translation edited by H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh, 1928).

of feeling and not the activity of rational thought; it is the "feeling of the infinite in the finite" and not mind conscious of itself as absolute Mind. The feeling of absolute dependence is equated by Schleiermacher with the Christian consciousness of relation to God:

> The immediate feeling of absolute dependence is presupposed and actually contained in every religious and Christian self-consciousness as the only way in which, in general, our own being and the infinite Being of God can be one in self-consciousness.[17]

The content of the Christian faith is interpreted by relation to experience; Christian doctrines, accordingly, are "accounts of the Christian religious affections set forth in speech."[18]

Schleiermacher consciously sought to ground the Christian religion in a principle of human experience. In the attempt itself, regardless of the clash of the content of their thought, Hegel and Schleiermacher speak with one voice. The essence of Christianity is regarded by both men as an expression of a form of human consciousness. Where they fundamentally differ is in the content of the form itself. For Schleiermacher the form is feeling, while for Hegel the form is rational thought. Both interpretations of religion represent an attempt to transcend particular, or sensible, consciousness in a higher self-consciousness. The absolute consciousness, for both systems, is a realization of the unity

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[17] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

between the subject and Ultimate Reality. The form of the consciousness, again, is the distinction between the two approaches. Basically, the distinction expresses Schleiermacher's acceptance and Hegel's rejection of Kant's repudiation of the theoretical reason as the ground of religion.

In utter contempt for its lack of preciseness and definiteness, Hegel cuttingly attacks the theology of Schleiermacher as the systematization of the empty religion of feeling.[19] The Absolute of this religion, Hegel charges, is simply represented in superficial manifoldness and subjectivity; the God of this religion is endowed with the subject's own caprice.[20] There is in this form of the religious consciousness as feeling a complete disregard of rational content. Yet, Hegel does not repudiate the form of feeling; rather, he seeks to define it carefully and show that it is limited and individual and is

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[19] "When such minds commit themselves to the unrestrained ferment of sheer emotion, they think that, by putting a veil over self-consciousness, and surrendering all understanding, they are thus God's beloved ones to whom He gives His wisdom in sleep. This is the reason, too, that in point of fact what they do conceive and bring forth in sleep is dreams" (The Phenomenology, pp. 74-75).

Lecturing in later years on the Philosophy of Religion, Hegel frequently engaged in tirades against the religion of feeling, and, specifically, the attempt of Schleiermacher to build his understanding of the Christian faith on the feeling of absolute dependence. Hegel's famous quip is that "If one says religion is based on the feeling of dependence, then the beast also must have religion." He went on to suggest that since the beasts are the most dependent, they must be the most religious (Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, p. 184).

[20] The Phenomenology, p. 74.

often misinterpreted. There is in religion a place for feeling--"not only can a true content exist in our feeling, it should and must so exist; as the saying went--one must have God in his heart."[21] This is true because the Absolute for Hegel is not something separated from the finite, of which the finite is only able to form opinions or ideas; rather, it is within finite spirit and is identical with the consciousness of the subject raised above mere particularity.[22]

The subjective consciousness of Absolute Spirit which Hegel designates as faith is essentially active, that is, it represents a process from which results the realized consciousness of the Absolute Spirit in the subject. Faith is defined by Hegel as "the witness of spirit (_Geistes_) to Absolute Spirit (_Geist_), or as certainty of truth. . . ."[23] Faith thus represents a mediation of Spirit in the finite spirit--the moment of the negation of separateness. It rests upon the substantive unity of Spirit, finite and Absolute; a unity, however, realized through separation or otherness. The process

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[21] _Werke_, bd. XV, _Philosophie der Religion_, p. 144.

[22] Hegel contrasts the true religious feeling with the simple feeling of piety, which, in his estimation implicitly represents a dualism, an ultimate separation or division. This feeling, as exemplified in pietism, rests is "singleness" or abstraction and finds expression simply in a feeling of dependence (_ibid_., pp. 24 ff.).

[23] _Ibid_., p. 222.

as a whole is the concrete self-consciousness of Spirit,[24] absolute in content, though still contingent and limited in form.

Religion in the true form of faith is established by the inner witness of Spirit, and not by external signs, miracles, events, or sacred records. Spirit revealing itself to spirit produces faith. In faith, the self is emptied, and the true Absolute Self-Consciousness is established by transmuting the discrete particularity of consciousness. At this point, faith represents, for Hegel, a clear advance over the form of feeling, since faith actively realizes the process of separation and reunion. Although the particular is other than the Absolute, the object of belief is not, therefore, foreign to the believing mind. "The trust of belief," Hegel writes, "consists just in finding itself as a particular personal consciousness in absolute Being, and its obedience and service consist in producing, through its activity, that Being as _its own_ Absolute."[25]

Faith is essentially this inner consciousness of Reality. It is thought with the characteristic immediacy of relation.

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[24] Hegel resists the charge of pantheism which he felt would be leveled at his _Philosophy of Religion_. The position would be rightly charged with pantheism, he argues, if it expressed the idea that man as an individual is God, that is, man as a particular, individual being. But, Hegel insists, this is not true of his system, for the very union involves the abrogation of naturalness, the negation of particularity, in order to realize the Absolute (_ibid_., pp. 224 ff.).

[25] _The Phenomenology_, p. 583.

The Absolute Spirit in itself is received by the believer, not as a connected, rational, self-determined concept, but as the inner self-consciousness, the conviction of being in relation to the Absolute. Thus it is that the Absolute of faith comes to be presented in the representative or imaginative thinking (Vorstellung). The Absolute as realized in faith is not self-determined idea, but is an immediately presented certainty, and, therefore, its Absolute, instead of being filled with rational, self-determined content, is grasped as a supra-rational, an Absolute Being over against the self-consciousness.[26]

Thought (Gedanke) is the activity of reason (Vernunft) and uses the rational forms of idea (Idee) and notion (Begriff). It is individual in the sense that it is an "I" who thinks but, as such, it is not a particular "I." Thought is active, that is, it involves the moment of the other; it is free in that it is self-determined. Thought is opposed to sense, but it is not simply the other of sense; it is "at once that other and itself."[27] Sense, in contrast to reason, belongs to the individual in his particularity, in his immediacy, and is external, limited in form and abstract.

Representative or imaginative thinking (Vorstellung),[28] the third form of the religious consciousness, uses material

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[26] Ibid., p. 553.

[27] The Logic, p. 38.

[28] The word "Vorstellung" may be variously translated. James Baillie uses such words as "figurative thought,"

from the external and the particular to characterize the Absolute. The two primary expressions of this form are historical events as interpreted by faith and generalized unrelated concepts, as for example, attributes assigned to God--omniscience, omnipresence. A "here" of particular and sensuous existence is made to refer to a "beyond"; or, by the negative reference to what is, the finite is used to refer to what transcends finite existence. The content of this form may be true; but, as historically, pictorially, or imaginatively represented, Absolute Spirit is not articulated in its true form of rational, self-determined notion.

Representative or imaginative thought, Hegel charges, admits readily the presumption of the removal, or isolation, of the subject from the object; so that, in what is a tragic error involved in this form, the basis for relation is presented in an external and objective manner; Absolute Spirit is simply received as an apparition appearing to finite spirit. This misuse of Vorstellung, this failure to see it as a form to be transcended, "degrades the content into a historical imaginative idea and an heirloom handed down by tradition. In this

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"pictorial presentation," "imaginative presentation," "pictorial thought." William Wallace uses "conception" or "picture thinking." E. B. Speirs generally translates "Vorstellung" in the Philosophy of Religion as "idea" with a small letter to distinguish it from the self-determining rational Idea which he spells with a capital letter. By this device he suggests the implication of a generalized concept or representation, or, as he occasionally translates it, "ordinary thought."

way there is retained and preserved only what is purely external in belief, and the retention of it as something dead and devoid of knowledge . . . ."[29]

In its true use, the form of Vorstellung is to be distinguished from any sensuous or factual reference. It is more than picture presentation in that it is a picture designed to point to the Absolute.[30] The true content of the form of representative or imaginative thought is not to be grasped in a sensuous manner, for, in its valid use as a form in which the human spirit is conscious of the Absolute, this form "cancels the unity of perception, rejects the oneness of the picture and the meaning, and lifts out this, the meaning, for itself."[31] The form is imperfect, but the content that is depicted in this form may embody the concrete truth, and, therefore, the very realization of the content opposes the pictorial and subjective aspects of this form. The import of this evaluation of the form of religious consciousness as Vorstellung for the content of Christian theology will be examined in the chapters which follow.

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[29] The Phenomenology, p. 768. Philosophy as the final mode of absolute mind has the task of giving to consciousness the Absolute in a harmony of absolute content and form. Hegel declares that "philosophy may be said to do nothing but transform conceptions [Vorstellungen] into thoughts [Gedanken],--though it works the further transformation of a mere thought [Gedanken] into a notion [Begriff]" (The Logic, p. 38).

[30] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, p. 154.

[31] Ibid., p. 155.

d. Reconciliation

The final cause of mind, the end or purpose toward which the process of reality moves, is, for Hegel, "Absolute Knowledge or spirit knowing itself as Spirit. . . ."[32] With the attainment of this "goal" the concrete whole, which is Reality in the Hegelian sense, is realized. The reconciliation of Spirit is the end and essential character of both philosophy and religion as modes of the Absolute Mind. Idea or reason in-itself is brought into unity with finite reason in its otherness, and, as the reconciliation is completed, is perfected as Absolute Mind or Reason which has being-in-and-for-itself (an-Fürsichseyn).

Religion represents Absolute Mind in its true mediated content. The comprehension of the concrete truth, the unity in difference, the reconciliation of that which is opposed by the negation of separateness, the realization of the higher synthesis, finds expression in the form of religion. For in religion, God, or the Absolute in itself, is reconciled with man. The separateness or particularity of human spirit is transmuted and the concrete union of Spirit, Spirit realized and realizing itself in the finite, the Divine Being-in-and-for-itself, is enunciated.

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[32] The Phenomenology, p. 808.

Accordingly, reconciliation is accomplished on two levels: in philosophy by mind conscious of itself as Absolute Mind, in religion by the consciousness of the incarnation of God in man. The two forms of reconciliation are to be distinguished "by the fact that the one [religion] is this reconciliation in the form of implicit immanence, the other [philosophy] in the form of explicit self-existence."[33] Philosophy at the moment of Absolute knowledge is the articulation of explicit reconciliation of self-consciousness in that it is Mind conscious of itself. Reconciliation, as realized in the form of religion, is simply implicit, immediate unity; it depicts the true concrete whole but lacks the specific self-determined necessary form of idea.

Religion, broadly considered, signifies, for Hegel, "the consciousness of Absolute Being in general" and, more particularly, in its highest moment, religion depicts the self-consciousness of Absolute Spirit, the moment of reconciliation in which Spirit knows itself as Spirit.[34] Spirit relates itself to its own other in religion, and by this, Hegel means, the self-consciousness of Absolute Spirit as that which knows and is known is constituted.

The actuality of Absolute Spirit in religion consists not in its being the substantive or ultimate principle, nor simply the object of imaginative or representative thought (Vor-

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[33] Ibid., p. 794.   [34] Ibid., p. 685.

stellung), but in its being the concrete Spirit reflecting itself into its other, the being-in-and-for-itself of Spirit. In the consciousness of the absolute as portrayed in religion, Spirit grasps its being immediately in self-consciousness:

> The Absolute Spirit is thus eternal in its own being as in-itself returning and returned identity, the one and the universal substance as spiritual, (involving) judgement [that is, the division into parts] in-itself and a consciousness for which it [Absolute Spirit] as such is.[35]

This self-consciousness of Absolute Spirit, imperfectly presented by forms of the religious consciousness, is the true content of religion for Hegel.

2. Religions

The consideration of "Religions" in contrast to "Religion" marks a transition to the analysis of the particular in history. Hegel rejects generalization from the particular as the way to the universal; rather, according to his system, the universal determines itself through the particular; and from the union of the universal and particular is formed the individual. The universal in-itself and the particular in-itself are both regarded by Hegel as abstractions. Only the individual as the union of the universal and particular is the

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[35] Werke, bd. V, Encyclopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften, hrsg. Lasson, p. 474.

concrete whole, and, therefore, only the individual in this distinct sense is ultimate and true. The concept of religion is the universal; the definite, historical religions are the particularization, the objectification of the idea of religion. The history of religions displays the movement toward the conscious actualization of the idea of religion in positive religions.

a. The Realization of the Idea in History

As Hegel understands it, history is the scene of the process of realization of the Idea. The Absolute is revealed in the world and is realized in history through a process or activity of development, a process which is dialectical in nature.[36] Spirit or Absolute Mind is objectified in the world. The otherness, the objectification is the antithesis of the Absolute. It is the moment of negation. The finite world is, then, the distinct other of the Infinite. But the process of history is the development through this moment of negation to

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[36] Hegel's dialectical method does not represent simply an a priori assumption adopted and then documented from other materials. The roots of the dialectical method are implicit in Hegel's appreciation of significance of the religious experience of reconciliation, and they are manifest in the practical organization or working out of Hegel's laborious study of history, including the history of states, the history of religions, the history of art, and the history of philosophy. This study supplied Hegel with the material of his method in the sense that he saw the dialectical pattern illustrated throughout all history.

the positive moment of the negation of the negation, the culminative moment of synthesis. History records the story of this realization of the Infinite in the finite, the reconciliation of the Absolute in-itself with its own other, the finite, in human institutions and government, in human art, religion, and thought.

There is one method for all reality, according to Hegel, and this is the method of the self-unfolding notion (Begriff).[37] History, as Hegel understands it, exhibits the same process as this method. The development in history is from potentiality, implicitness, being-in-self (Ansichseyn) to realization, explicitness, being-in-and-for-self (an-Fürsichseyn).[38] Progress is achieved by the process of realizing the potential already implicitly present. The end of history, for Hegel, is present in the beginning, but only implicitly; it is actualized or made

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[37] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, p. 75.

[38] The Aristotelian analysis of potentiality and actuality and the process of movement to the realization of the higher forms is suggestive for understanding Hegel's thought at this point. For Aristotle the process of the world represents the transition from potential being to actual being, from matter to form. The systems of both Aristotle and Hegel represent theories of movement or development, but Hegel departs from Aristotle in his denial of any substantive matter. In Aristotelian thought pure matter is potentiality and pure form is actuality. Hegel resists all concepts suggestive of substance as an ultimate, and while the terms "in-itself" and "potential," and "for-itself" and "actual" are the analysis of the nature of movement in both systems, they are not exactly parallel. Hegel views the abstract unformed as an impossibility, an empty nothing.

explicit in history.[39] The history of religions, for example, exhibits for Hegel the development from the most abstract understanding of the relation to the ultimate in the primitive religion of consciousness to the concrete realization of the principle of the union of the finite and the infinite in the spiritual religion of Christianity. But while he recognizes the ultimateness of Christianity, Hegel presents the view that the history of religions displays simply a process of making actual what was potentially or implicitly present in the most primitive understanding of God. Primitive religion, the religion of consciousness, is in-itself (_an_-_sich_); the spiritual religion is in-and-for-itself (_an_-_und_-_für_-_sich_).

Hegel approaches the subject of history with the fixed presupposition (a presupposition which lies behind all his explications of history--the histories of states, of art, of religion, of philosophy) that history "is founded on an essential and actual aim, which actually is and will be realised in it--the plan of Providence . . . ."[40] This teleological orientation, or the priority of the final cause, is fundamental to Hegel's thought. That there is "reason in history," Hegel

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[39] This same fundamental structure of development permeates the whole of Hegel's thought. In _Science of Logic_, for example, the concept of being implicitly contains the Absolute Idea, and _Science of Logic_ simply displays the self-unfolding development of the idea from the ultimate simple concept, the concept of being, to its final and full expression in Absolute Idea.

[40] _Philosophy of Mind_, p. 148.

insists, must be determined on strictly philosophical grounds.[41] This "a priori view" of history is false, in Hegel's view, only when the conclusions are adopted without the strict adherence to the development of the idea, and he, of course, holds that his conclusions are produced by observing and analyzing the idea in-itself realizing itself in history and that they are not the attempts to force events and actions into conformity to any conception. The conclusions are the essential representation of the idea itself and the clear evidence of history. The conviction of reason in history, Hegel asserts in the introductory sections of his study of the Philosophy of History, is not merely the presupposition of his study, it is the result as well. He goes on to state:

> Therefore, only the study of world history itself can show that it has proceeded rationally, that it represents the rationally necessary course of the World Spirit, the Spirit whose nature is indeed always one and the same, but whose one nature unfolds in the course of the world.[42]

History, accordingly, involves the account of the development of Spirit and the philosophy of history is the explication of the meaning to be found in this account, which is the nature of history itself.

Positive religions, then, are not the discoveries or inventions of men, but are the products of Divine Spirit

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[41] Ibid.

[42] G. W. F. Hegel, Reason in History, trans. Robert S. Hartman (New York, 1953), p. 12.

actualizing itself. The history of religions displays the self-unfolding determination of Absolute Spirit in the life of man. Hegel attacks the view that regards the world as essentially evil, as "God forsaken,"[43] and insists on the revelation of God in history. The Ultimate Spirit or Reason is the primary reality for Hegel, but he insists as well that Reason is revealed in the unfolding of history.

b. The Evolution of Religion

All three modes of the Absolute Mind--art, religion, and philosophy--exhibit the evolution of the self-unfolding notion.[44] The evolution of religion in history is from the form of substance to that of subject, from abstraction to incarnation.

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[43] T. M. Knox suggests, in his notes on Hegel's Philosophy of Right, that this attack is an expression of Hegel's opposition to the pietistic separation of the world from God and exaltation of the inner conviction of the feelings. Hegel holds in opposition to this view that the world is not evil nor "God forsaken" but a revelation of God, that God reveals himself in the world, in history, and in nature (Philosophy of Right, p. 300).

[44] In his lectures entitled The Philosophy of Fine Art, Hegel depicts the evolution of the ideal in the types of fine art. The first level is that of "Symbolic Art" which attempts to express the ideal in external and abstract form. The next level is that of "Classical Art" which represents the ideal in the human form of individuality. The final level is what Hegel calls "Romantic Art" which, in his analysis, is the title given to the forms of art that express the Idea in a more spiritual fashion, in terms of the subjectivity as such. The Philosophy

The first expression of positive religion is the religion of nature which represents the moment of the immediate unity of the spiritual and the natural. God is posited in a particular mode of existence. The qualities of externality, immediacy, and particularity characterize religion in this its lowest form. But even in the primitive form of magic, the religion of nature represents the spiritual principle ruling over nature. As this form of religion becomes more abstract, the Absolute comes to have the character of an ultimate power, and in the natural religion of imagination the ultimate is represented as an abiding, self-enclosed power, such as the Brahma of Hinduism. The final form of this stage of religion is the enunciation of an abstract God as the only reality; and, coordinate with this is the denial of any reality outside this Spirit.

The history of the religion of nature represents a gradual abstraction of God and the separation of the particular self-consciousness from the divine Absolute. In this process, there comes to be established a chasm between subjectivity and objectivity. The Ultimate Object or Absolute is elevated to an exalted position and the abstract name of God is held in

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of Fine Art, in recounting the development of art, depicts the gradual idealization of the external medium of art, the gradual extension of the union of content and form.

The History of Philosophy deals with the gradual realization of Absolute Mind in the history of thought. It is the history of the notion unfolding itself in the systems of philosophy.

reverence and awe. The transitional link to the second level in Hegel's analysis of the development of positive religions is provided by this exaltation of the Ultimate and the introduction of the idea of opposing forces struggling within the ultimate principle, as, for example, the struggle between the ultimates of light and darkness in Zoroastrianism.

The second level of development in the history of religions takes the form, according to Hegel, of the "Religion of Spiritual Individuality." The progress represented in this step is the movement from the religion of consciousness to the religion of self-consciousness. In this second major form of religion, man exists as a self-conscious being essentially for himself and is directed toward a God who is over against him. This form of religion finds expression in "the religion of sublimity" in which God as divine particularity, as absolute power, is determined in himself. The Jewish religion, which, according to Hegel, is a religion of fear in the form of the obliteration of the self before God and of abstract service in blind obedience to the law of God, belongs to this level. The Greek religion of beauty, in which man recognizes the ideal or truth in life, is essentially a religion of the particularity of man as the ultimate, and, therefore, stands at the opposite extreme from the religion of sublimity. The Greek religion is imperfect, in Hegel's opinion, because spirit is in this form not yet self-conscious spirit; it does not represent spirit as conscious of itself as spirit, but as estranged, shut up in

itself. It is the religious expression of absolute reflection of self-consciousness into itself.

The final stage in the development of the religion of spiritual individuality is the religion of utility or purposefulness as exemplified by the Roman religion. According to Hegel, the principle of absolute religion--the union of the finite and the Infinite--is expressed in this religion but the union is unspiritual and is marked by empirical objectivity. The definite individuality of the finite is absolutized in the Roman religion. Man as "person" is represented in Roman law and religion as the Absolute. In this moment of particularity, the Absolute is no longer regarded as an exalted Absolute Being, as in the Jewish religion, nor as the simple estranged self-consciousness, as in the Greek religion, but as the moment of particularity, man as man.

The Roman world represents for Hegel the point of transition in the realization of the idea in the history of religion. The immediate, abstract unity of natural religion becomes, in the religion of the Roman world, particularized and is given definite character. This is the negative moment, the denial of the sublime absolute, and from the transmutation of this negation, the absolute religion proceeds.

The final stage in the evolution of religion is the absolute religion in which the particular is taken into the Universal. With this religion:

> God is self conscious being; he knows himself in a consciousness distinct from himself, which in itself is the conscious being of God, and also for self, since it knows its identity with God, an identity, which, however, is mediated through the negation of the finite.[45]

The absolute religion so described finds its articulate form, for Hegel, in the idea of Christianity. The development at this point has reached its explicit fulfillment. With this stage Spirit is in-and-for-itself, it is subject and object, the self-determined, concrete Absolute.

c. Positive Religions

The positive religions set forth in the history of the development of religion exhibit the same pattern of development as that represented in the moments of mind articulating Absolute Mind. Concerning this realization, Hegel writes in the Philosophy of Mind that--

> The grades of this elevation of certainty to truth are three in number: first (a) consciousness in general, with an object set against it; (b) self-consciousness, for which ego is the object; (c) unity of consciousness and self-consciousness, where the mind sees itself embodied in the object and sees itself as implicitly and explicitly determinate, as Reason, the notion of mind.[46]

The positive religious awareness in its earliest moment in

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[45] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 191.

[46] Philosophy of Mind, p. 49.

history is the consciousness of the Absolute as a separate object in a natural, objective, or immediate shape. This is the religion of nature, or religion at the level of consciousness in general. At this level the religious consciousness is marked by a direct, immediate sense of relation, a relation of simple awareness.[47] The religion of spiritual subjectivity transcends this objective immediacy and introduces the form of self and, as such, represents the self-conscious moment of mind. Finally, in absolute religion, Spirit is realized in the union of the finite and the Infinite in-and-for-itself. This perfected content of religion has the same significance as absolute knowledge though in a different form. The form of religion is imaginative, pictorial thought, and stands in contrast to self-contained Idea of Absolute Knowledge.

The finite spirit arrives at a positive religion, Hegel remarks, by virtue of Spirit making itself an object for itself in the spirit of man.[48] The history of religions is grasped by Hegel not as historical phenomena. Although he brings in a wealth of historical details, it is as moments of idea in the realization of the Absolute Idea. This theme of

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[47] Religion as direct consciousness, a level which Hegel interpreted as moment to be superseded by the development of consciousness, Schleiermacher proclaimed as the high moment of religion. The feeling of absolute dependence, the awareness of one infinite in one finite, is identified by Schleiermacher as "the highest grade of human self-consciousness" (The Christian Faith, pp. 18 ff.).

[48] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, pp. 70-71.

the development of consciousness toward the realization of the Absolute runs through the whole of Hegel's thought; and the various aspects of his thought must be understood by reference to this process or activity. The development in the history of religions is factual, but it is considered by Hegel primarily as illustrative of the development of mind:

> The first realization of spirit is just the principle and notion of religion itself--religion as immediate and thus Natural Religion. Here spirit knows itself as its object in a 'natural' or immediate shape. The second realization, is, however, necessarily that of knowing itself in the shape of transcended and superseded natural existence, i.e., in the form of self. This therefore is Religion in the form of Art. For the shape it adopts is raised to the form of self through the productive activity of consciousness, by which this consciousness beholds in its object its own object, i.e. sees the self. The third realization, finally, cancels the one-sidedness of the first two: the self is as much an immediate self as the immediacy is a self. If spirit in the first is in the form of consciousness, and in the second in that of self consciousness, it is in the third in the form of the unity of both; it has then the shape of what is completely self-contained (An-und-Fürsichseyns); and in being thus presented as it is in and for itself, this is Revealed Religion.[49]

The result of Hegel's treatment of the history of religion is that a particular, positive religion, although it has a role in the story of the unfolding of the absolute religion,

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[49] The Phenomenology, pp. 693-694. In a note introducing the section on "Natural religions" in his translation of The Phenomenology, Baillie remarks: "The historical material before the mind of the writer [i.e. Hegel] is, as might be expected, the various religions which have historically appeared amongst mankind. These religions are treated, however, as illustrations of principles dominating the religious consciousness in general, rather than as merely historical phenomena" (ibid., p. 659).

does not essentially signify a particular tradition or moment in history but a definite moment of Idea. The parallel is sometimes expressed by Hegel, and sometimes left unexpressed, but throughout his analysis of positive religions there is the intimation that these religions only have a meaningful place as suggestive or representative of the development of Mind. It is the content of the particular religion as Idea that is significant to Hegel. The form belongs to history and is of value only in picturing the idea represented in the particular religion.

d. God in History

The history of the world, as Hegel represents it, is a process of the development, the realization, of Spirit. This process manifests God in history--the progressive self-determination of the Absolute in the finite. In the closing paragraph of his Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Hegel states his conviction that God, or Absolute Spirit, is in history: "Only this insight can reconcile Spirit with the History of the World--viz., that what has happened, and is happening every day, is not only not 'without God,' but is essentially His Work."[50]

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[50] G. W. F. Hegel, The Philosophy of History, trans. J. Sibree (New York, 1956), p. 457.

The nature of the world is Idea in its otherness, but it is only fully realized as Idea in the world's consciousness of itself in the powers of finite man as Spirit. This idealization of the world, the reconciliation of Idea and its other, is the process of the self-determination of the Absolute in the finite. Reason-in-itself becomes reason in its objectification in reason-for-itself and is perfected in the moment in which Reason has being in-and-for-itself, in mind conscious of itself as Mind.

Hegel's distinctive approach to history is founded upon his conviction that Reason is in history realizing itself. For Hegel, the true theodicy, which in this context is to be considered as the vindication of the activity of God in history or as the defense of the rationality of the world, is the consideration of the process of the development of Spirit as it culminates in the actual realization of Absolute Mind. This moment of realization is found in the absolute religion and in absolute knowledge. The recounting of the development of religion as the realization of Absolute Spirit describes, according to Hegel, the true theodicy, for this evolution of religion--

> shows all the moments (_Erzeugnisse_) of spirit, displays each form of its self-knowledge as necessary, because spirit is living, active; it is a moving force, determined to penetrate (through the sequence of its manifestations) to its self-realization as Ultimate Truth.[51]

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[51] _Werke_, bd. XV, _Philosophie der Religion_, p. 100. Both the development in religion and in philosophy are characterized by Hegel as being the true theodicy. Each expression of

3. The Absolute Religion

a. The Concept

The first section of Hegel's discussion of "Religion" in The Phenomenology draws together the content of the preceding analysis of the development of mind and points toward the full realization of Mind in Absolute Idea. Only in the concrete, or full development, is it possible for the Absolute to be realized; for truth is presented by Hegel in terms of a concrete system of the whole.

Spirit conscious of itself as Spirit is the conclusive designation of the sphere of religion; the inadequacy of incompleteness, abstraction in self, is done away with at this point. The completion or perfection of religion for Hegel--

> consists in the two forms [i.e. of Geist] becoming identical with one another: not merely in its reality being grasped and embraced by religion, but conversely--it, as spirit conscious of itself, becomes actual to itself, and real object of its own consciousness.[52]

It is essential to the nature of the perfect expression of religion that it be regarded as a revealed religion, revealed, that is, in the sense which Hegel uses the term; and, secondly, that it be revealed by God as the Absolute, Self-

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religion and each development of thought is considered by Hegel to be necessary to the whole. Cf. The History of Philosophy, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simpson (London, 1896), III, 546.

[52] The Phenomenology, p. 688.

determining Spirit which objectifies, expresses, completes itself in otherness. True religion, religion whose content is the Absolute Spirit, is revealed religion. Hegel states that:

> It lies essentially in the notion of religion,--the religion i.e. whose content is absolute mind--that it be revealed, and, what is more, revealed by God. Knowledge (the principle by which the substance is mind) is a self determining principle, as infinite self-realising form,--it therefore is manifestation out and out. The spirit is only spirit in so far as it is for the spirit, and in the absolute religion it is the absolute spirit which manifests no longer abstract elements of its being but itself.[53]

Accordingly, revelation is this self-objectification of the Absolute Form of Being, the self-manifestation of Spirit. Absolute religion exhibits the content of Absolute Idea--the notion (Begriff) as the self-determining idea. In religion this takes the form of the Absolute Spirit revealing itself to man and in man. Hegel asserts: "This is the notion, it is the notion of Absolute Idea; reality is now Spirit which is for spirit and which has itself for an object; and thus, this religion is the revealed religion--God reveals himself."[54] Hegel goes on to state that revelation essentially involves this division (Urtheil) or objectification of the infinite form, its being for another.[55]

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53. Philosophy of Mind, p. 175.

54. Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 197.

55. Ibid.

Revelation in absolute religion, therefore, has to do, not with something external or objective, but with what is within the subject, with the unity of God and the conscious subject. The perfection of religion is this subjective realization of the union with the Absolute. It is subjective, not in the sense of particularity, but as individuality--as the universal in the particular.[56] Particularity is abstract subjectivity, the self isolated in-itself; individuality is concrete subjectivity, the self conscious of itself in its other. Revelation, as an essential element of the absolute religion, expresses the determination or articulation of the Absolute in its otherness, in subject.

Absolute religion is characterized by Hegel as the religion of truth and freedom.[57] Truth is the concrete whole; it involves the union of opposites, the union of subject and object, the union of Infinite and finite in a concrete whole. Absolute religion is truth in this same sense, namely, that in it spirit is the concrete moment of spirit conscious of itself as Spirit. For religion to be absolute it must depict in

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[56] Hegel characterizes the religion of subjectivity of his day, or the religion of feeling as exemplified in the thought of Schleiermacher, as being, in a derogatory sense, the religion of particular subjectivity. The religion of subjectivity has, however, Hegel states, made an important contribution in that it involves the recognition of the subject as absolute moment. But as expressed in the religion of subjectivity it is abstract subjectivity isolated in the self (*ibid*., pp. 194 ff.).

[57] *Ibid*., p. 207.

its forms this perfected reconciliation of opposites. The reality of the union of the finite and infinite is the essential and fundamental characteristic of both absolute knowledge and absolute religion. Anything less than this realized union is abstract and imperfect. Absolute religion is concrete and perfect for it is in fact the realization of this union.

The significance of freedom as the character of absolute religion is coordinate with the meaning of truth. The absence of freedom is determination by what is discrete, absolutely distinct, and separated from the self. Slavery is the obedience to commands directed to the self from outside. Therefore, freedom, for Hegel, involves, even as truth, the negation of separation, or otherness, and the realization of union. In freedom, Absolute Spirit determines the finite spirit as the self-determination of itself. The perfect freedom is the elimination of all limits outside the self and is expressed in the self-determination of Absolute Spirit represented in absolute and complete religion.[58]

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[58] The significance of freedom and its absence for Hegel parallels Spinoza's definition of what is free and what is determined: "That thing is called free, which exists solely by the necessity of its own nature, and of which the action is determined by itself alone. On the other hand, that thing is necessary, or rather constrained, which is determined by something external to itself to a fixed and definite method of existence or action" (Chief Works, vol. II, The Ethics, p. 46).

b. In History

The history of religions depicts the development from the implicit representation of Absolute Idea in the religion of nature to its explicit representation in the absolute religion of Spirit; it is, therefore, a movement toward the conscious realization of Absolute Spirit in its other. As we have seen, the historical process represents always a dialectical movement. First comes the abstract moment, the moment of identity, the moment of idea-in-itself. Then comes the negation of the abstract idea in the particularization of the Absolute. Finally, there ensues the realization of the Absolute in the negation of the negative or incomplete and transient moment. The ultimate positive moment in the history of religions is represented in the idea of the Christian religion for Hegel. This moment in history, the moment of the concrete truth of religion, however, is not shut within itself but is the system of the whole, the concrete truth of all the moments of the history of religion.

The positive religions of the Oriental world manifest, according to Hegel, the moment of abstraction in which the particular is denied and the Universal alone is affirmed. The Ultimate is the sublime One. The antithetical moment, which contrasts with this first abstraction, is the religion which represents the Ultimate considered as the particular. Greek polytheistic religion, as Hegel describes it, so characterizes the ultimate in discrete particularity of multiple deities.

In its finest moment, Greek religion reaches what Hegel terms the level of a religion of beauty; and, by this, he means Greek religion depicts an ideal in human form and characteristics; particularity is used to represent, to depict, what lies beyond it. The moment of particularity finds its consumate expression in the religion of the Roman world and attendant law and life; in this religion, particularity as state and as person is declared to be the Ultimate. The absolutizing of finitude and particularity means, Hegel concludes--

> the total disappearance of all beautiful, moral life, the falling away from true life into the infinitude of the desires, into momentary enjoyment and pleasure, and this stage in the entire shape in which it appears, constitutes a human animal-kingdom, from which everything of a higher nature, everything substantial has been removed.[59]

Accordingly, the Roman world represents the completion of the moment of otherness, of finitude. This moment, in the opposition of spirit to spirit, is the moment of "the absolute misery, and the absolute sorrow of Spirit. . . ."[60]

Philosophical thought in the Roman world gave expression to the disillusionment, the indifference of finite spirit to the Absolute; for, as Hegel views the spirit of the Roman people, "the whole state of things urged them to yield themselves to fate, and to strive for a perfect indifference to

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[59] Philosophy of Religion, II, 319.

[60] Ibid., p. 320.

life--an indifference which they sought either in freedom of thought or in directly sensuous enjoyment."[61] The empty scepticism, the despair, the denial of ultimate reality was articulated in Stoicism and Epicureanism.

The disillusionment of the Roman world was, therefore, "an open rupture with reality" in human existence and the whole realm of the empirical. But this moment of negation was in turn transmuted as the desire for the reconciliation of spirit became prominent.[62] It was necessary, Hegel argues, for man to experience the moment of negation, the deep misery of his nature, his nothingness as a particular individual, before he was ready to receive the higher spiritual reality. The world historical importance of the Jewish people, according to Hegel's analysis, lies in their realization of the negation inherent in disillusionment. Man must, Hegel says, "feel himself as the negation of himself; he must see that his misery is the misery of his nature--that he is in himself a divided and discordant being."[63]

The moment of misery in the history of mankind opened the way for a higher phase. At this point, the moment of the fullness of time, God sent his son. According to the Hegelian understanding of history, the fullness of time means the negative moment of otherness had been fully stated, and that the

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[61] Philosophy of History, p. 317.

[62] Ibid., p. 318.

[63] Ibid., p. 321.

negation of the negation, the positive statement, could now be presented. At this moment "self-consciousness had reached the phases of development (Momente), whose resultant constitutes the Idea of Spirit, and had come to feel the necessity of comprehending those phases absolutely."[64] Thus Spirit is comprehended in man; the Absolute Spirit is revealed in human life as Spirit conscious of itself as Spirit.

The Absolute Spirit is perfectly represented, for Hegel, in the idea of the Christian religion, that is, the idea pictorially represented in Jesus Christ. But the Christian religion, as distinct from its idea, has a history, and this historical development represents the realization of Idea in the church. Spirit lives in the church as its inward, directing power. Spirit is in the world, reconciling to itself the world of the subjective particular to the end that Absolute Spirit might be fully realized in the world.

Hegel suggests that the Idea is articulated in the historical development of the Protestant Reformation and the Spirit of the German people. The Reformation introduced the true idea of the significance of the self. Man is saved, under this understanding of religion, by the spiritual self within. But this movement failed to fully realize the reality of Spirit, Hegel concludes, because it viewed subjectivity as evil, and separated on the one side "the will of the

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[64] Ibid., p. 319.

individual--the spirit of man--I myself, and on the other the Grace of God, the Holy Ghost; . . ."[65] This dichotomy contradicts the nature of Spirit as the union of subject and object. For Hegel, Spirit is actualized in spirit, Absolute Spirit involves finite spirit; the two are not separated as alien forms of being. The perfection of the union is represented in the spirit of the German people, for, as Hegel depicts the principle of their life, the world, the whole of finite life, is not renounced but reconciled. The reunion of Spirit in the conscious Spirit in man takes the outward form of the sacredness of all occupation and the priesthood of all believers; the whole of life is reconciled. Thus Hegel concludes--

> the Germans were predestined to be the bearers of the Christian principle, and to carry out the Idea as the absolutely Rational aim . . . . The Spirit of God lives in the Church; it is the inward impelling Spirit. But it is in the World that Spirit is to be realized--in a material not yet brought into harmony with it.[66]

This material is basically the subjective will, but it is also the outward occupation. The perfection of the principle of the German world lies in the spiritualization of the whole of life, so that "secular pursuits are a spiritual occupation."[67]

Whatever may be the inadequacy of Hegel's review of the spirit of the German world, and certainly the course of history

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[65] *Ibid.*, p. 438.

[66] *Ibid.*, pp. 354-355.

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 355.

has not borne out his grand vision of their role in world history, Hegel's analysis of the principle of the German world is a valid and meaningful statement of the Reformation doctrine of Christian vocation. Perhaps, through Martin Luther and the Protestant movement, the Germans were indeed the bearers of the Christian principle that all life is holy, that all life belongs to God, and that, therefore, there is no separate religious vocation as distinct from secular vocations but all worthy pursuits are spiritual occupations.

c. Christianity: the Absolute and Perfect Religion

Hegel asserts that the absolute and perfect religion (*die vollendete, absolute Religion*) is the Christian religion--"This knowledge of the spirit for-itself, as it is in-itself, is the in-and-for-itself-being (*das An-und-Fürsichseyn*) of the knowing Spirit, the perfected, absolute religion, in which it is manifest what Spirit, what God is: this is the Christian religion."[68] This religion is the perfect religion, for in it Spirit is itself for itself, the universal and particular spirit are reconciled in their absolute identity. This is the idea of the Christian religion, its message and content, for Hegel.[69]

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[68] *Werke*, bd. XV, *Philosophie der Religion*, p. 99.

[69] *Ibid.*, XVI, 193-194.

God as Spirit, as Spirit conscious of itself, is articulated in Christianity, and this is, according to Hegel, "the axis on which the History of the World turns. . . . the goal and the starting point of History."[70] All forms of religion involve the consciousness of Spirit, and, therefore, Hegel insists, the various religions signalized degrees of the realization of truth. The religions of nature and spiritual subjectivity partially express the Absolute Spirit but do so in imperfect and abstract consciousness. The explicit realization of Spirit, the true and perfect religion, is the Christian religion in which the Spirit is conscious of itself. The God revealed in Christianity is God known as Spirit, that is, as "a Being which is essentially self-conscious."[71] Thus in Christianity the Absolute is known not as separate substance but in the form of self, as that which reveals and is revealed, itself manifest to self. God is revealed as he is as Spirit (Geist).

Christianity signifies the reconciliation of God and man; therefore, Hegel insists, Christianity is not a simple feeling of the heart, or moral teachings, but the completion of Spirit itself. In its essential significance, Christianity is a relation, a spiritual union, in which Divine Spirit is united with finite spirit. Christianity is viewed by Hegel as the

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[70] Philosophy of History, p. 319.

[71] The Phenomenology, p. 759.

truth, the perfecting of the divine spiritual history, the concrete whole of Spirit. As the concrete whole of Spirit, Christianity is the divine Spirit and the finite spirit joined in separation and union, in the absolute true being of Spirit (*Geist*)--of God-man.

PART TWO

THE GENIUS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Chapter III

THE IDEA OF GOD

The impellent of Hegel's quest for unity and wholeness may be considered to be fundamentally religious, and, specifically, it suggests a relation to Christian faith. Even in its most rationalistic moments, Hegel's speculation, Richard Kroner remarks, was imbued with Christianity.[1] The quest was an attempt to overcome separation and to achieve reconciliation. Even as discontinuity was not limited to the separation of subject and object in the noetic process, but was regarded ultimately as the separation of Reality and finite existence, so also the solution which Hegel proffered went beyond a continuity of the knower and the known to a type of salvation doctrine involving the reconciliation of finite and Infinite

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[1] "Introduction," Early Theological Writings, p. 52.

Spirit. The systematic monism of Idea, Hegel's solution to the problem of multiplicity or separateness, is founded upon a premise which is essentially religious--a doctrine of a Divine Principle undergirding the world and expressing itself in the whole of reality. The concretion of Mind as absolute knowledge is Hegel's conceptual designation of what he regarded as the Christian idea of God as Spirit reconciling man to himself.

When Hegel asserts that "Spirit alone is reality . . . ," that Spirit is the inner being of the world which essentially is, that it is self-contained and self-complete,[2] he is explicating his understanding of God. Hegel's conception of reality and his idea of God merge in the integrity of his system, for Reality as a whole is a union of separation and union, and God, the religious designation of Ultimate Reality, is Spirit objectifying itself in otherness and reuniting itself in the moment of Absolute Spirit.

Hegel repeatedly insists that philosophy and religion have the same object, and the same essential content, but that they are expressed in different forms. Therefore, Christianity as absolute and perfect religion signalizes Absolute Idea. And from the opposite perspective, absolute idealism is the speculative expression of the content depicted in the Christian religion.

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[2] The Phenomenology, p. 86.

As Hegel analyzes the Christian doctrine of God, the incarnation, and the reconciliation accomplished in the community of Spirit, he finds expressed in this faith the content of Absolute Idea. From this he concludes that the Christian religion is the absolute religion. Emil Brunner correctly states Hegel's position when he writes that for Hegel "the Christian religion is understood as the particular concrete example of the religious principle in history which approximates most closely to the idea. . . ."[3]

As the presentation of the speculative idea in a religious form, Christianity is adjudged by Hegel to contrast with imperfect expressions of religion. His review of the history of religions produces the conclusion that what is implicitly expressed in other positive religions, the concept of the spirit as the union of the infinite and the finite, is explicitly realized in Christianity.

Hegel carefully distinguishes between the idea of Christianity and the positive expressions of Christian religion.[4] The essence of Christianity is the content depicted by its doctrines. In the Philosophy of History, Hegel makes reference to "those abstract ideas which are the fundamental purport of

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[3] Emil Brunner, The Philosophy of Religion, trans. A. J. D. Farrer and Bertran Lee Woolf (London, 1937), pp. 38-39.

[4] Unless otherwise stated future references in this study to Christianity, or the Christian religion, will refer to the idea of Christianity rather than to an actual historical phenomenon.

the Christian religion.[5] Writing against "faith philosophy" and religion founded upon moral imperatives, Hegel declares that such views, as expressed for example by Kant, are in opposition to the Christian faith, for they have none of the definiteness of the Christian system, none of what Hegel regards as the spiritual fullness of the Christian faith. In making this objection, he remarks that "the Christian faith is a copious body of objective truth, a system of knowledge and doctrine . . . ."[6] This interpretation of Christianity as idea illustrates the nature of the impact of Christianity on Hegel's thought.

The criterion by which Hegel determines Christian doctrine is not historical revelation, nor the scriptures, nor the historical creeds of the Christian Church. "It is a matter of perfect indifference," he declares, "where a thing originated."[7] The question whether a doctrine is to be found in the Bible is totally unimportant. The dogma of the church is acceptable only as it represents "the idea of Christianity." Spirit realizes itself, reveals itself, not in the mechanical handing down of doctrine, but in reason. The only question Hegel will accept as a criterion for judging true Christian doctrine is--"Is it true in and for itself?"[8] And this

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[5] Philosophy of History, p. 330.

[6] The Logic, p. 125.

[7] Philosophy of History, p. 331.

[8] Ibid.

question suggests the same criterion as that used for Absolute Idea, the truth of Ultimate Reality, or Absolute Mind. To be true it must signify self-contained, self-supporting, self-determined Idea. Truth (Wahrheit) belongs to the idea itself, not to its source. Idea is to be judged on the basis of the agreement of the thought and content with itself in self-consistent determination.

In this manner Hegel resolves the issue of natural theology as over against revealed theology. The Christian religion embraces a body of objective true idea. History is the scene of the realization of Idea, and, accordingly, the content of the revelation in history is the Idea itself. The manner and content of revelation is not an event, except as an event is the moment of the development of consciousness. Properly regarded, revelation is the self-unfolding process of Mind.

Hegel's evaluation of the Christian religion is based upon his statement of the Christian idea of God. The genius of the Christian understanding of God is the absolute nature of God expressed in the Christian religion. The God of Christian theology, according to Hegel's interpretation, is not abstract but concrete as the completed expression of the self-consciousness of Absolute Mind.[9] God is spiritual, personal, and active in this understanding. Absolute Idea is represented in the doctrine of the Trinity. Each of these expressions

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[9] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 318.

represents an essential part of the position which Hegel assigns to the Christian religion.

1. God as Spirit

a. Self-conscious Mind[10]

The basis of Hegel's interpretation of the Absolute is the manner in which he interprets the self-conscious Mind (Geist). Mind does not represent a thinking thing but is ideas consciously realized. As such, mind is both an act and a result; it is the activity of thought and the result of that thought. Considered in terms of finite human consciousness, mind is the isolated categories of the particular, but considered in terms of the self-consciousness of Mind, Mind signalizes the character of reality in its awareness of itself as self-determining Idea. Mind is one as the activity of reason and as the result of that activity--the notion (Begriff) or self-determining rational concept.

The moments of consciousness-simple awareness, self-consciousness, spirit conscious of itself as Spirit--comprise the reconciliation of Mind with its own true self. Each of

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[10] It is essential to this whole discussion that the word "Geist" be translated both as mind and as Spirit, and that it, therefore, suggest both the human mind or spirit and the divine Spirit. Richard Kroner suggests that: "In his conception of Geist Hegel found the inseparable connection between mind and spirit, between the human and the divine" ("Introduction," Early Theological Writings, p. 33).

the moments are isolated in themselves and, therefore, are abstract. Only in the total process, the whole of Mind, is the concrete reality of Mind realized. The last of these moments, the moment of self-conscious Spirit, is "this unity itself, and . . . binds them all in fact into itself. Spirit certain of itself in objective existence takes as the element of its existence nothing else than this knowledge of self."[11]

Actual consciousness requires distinction in an other, since without the other, the consciousness cannot be realized but remains abstract, indistinct, indefinite in-itself. Self-consciousness is the self aware of itself, but this stage, while it is an advance over simple, immediate consciousness, only fulfills itself in the further development of consciousness of the identity of self with its other.

Self-conscious Mind realizing itself in its own other is the character of the Hegelian Absolute. The philosophical sense of Absolute Idea is the notion which has itself for its object in distinction and difference. Corresponding to this is the designation of God as absolute self-consciousness: "God is himself conscious being, his distinction is in self, and, as conscious being, he renders himself as an object."[12]

The notion (Begriff), the self-determining dynamic principle of Spirit, has its reality, its actuality in

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[11] The Phenomenology, p. 793.

[12] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 192.

Mind.[13] The Absolute Spirit, even as the self-conscious mind, establishes its reality or actuality through its other, subjective and objective mind. Absolute Spirit in-itself, in its immediacy, is abstract, but through its other, the Absolute Spirit actualizes itself as Spirit.[14]

The other of the Absolute is not isolated from it, but is related as the determination of Spirit. The separation or distinction is essential, but it is a distinction of self-determining Spirit. The content of the Absolute "is therefore content which is identical with itself, because it is the infinite substantial subjectivity which makes itself object and content."[15]

b. Necessity of Negation

Science of Logic presents the dynamic process of the self-determination of idea. This analysis articulates Hegel's repudiation of the fixed categories of the understanding. Categories of the understanding are formulated, Hegel insists, under the abstract determination of the law of identity, according to which A is A or, negatively stated, A cannot be at

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[13] Werke, bd. V, Encyclopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften, hrsg. Lasson, p. 474.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 197.

once A and not-A. By contrast, Hegel argues that the truth is "everything is opposed . . . . Whatever is, is concrete, with difference and opposition in itself."[16] For Hegel, determination of meaning is "essentially a transition into the opposite; the negative of any determinateness is as necessary as the determinateness itself; and each immediate determinateness is immediately opposed by the other."[17]

Without the determination by negation, idea is devoid of content and meaning. The immediate category is a thesis, an idea in-itself. The antithesis, the distinction in an opposite, is produced by the inherent contradiction of the content of the idea itself.[18] The second negation, the negation of the negation, transmutes the contradiction and results in the synthesis of the idea and its antithesis. This in turn is a new thesis. Hegel asserts that "the thinking of contradiction is the essential moment of the notion."[19] Without this determination, all thought is empty abstract assertion of identity. This determination by negation, for Hegel, "is the simple point of negative self-relation, the innermost source of all activity, of living and spiritual self-movement, the dialectical soul which all truth has in it and through which it alone is truth. . . ."[20]

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[16] Werke, bd. VIII, System der Philosophie, p. 280.

[17] Science of Logic, II, 36.

[18] Ibid., p. 477. [19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

Absolute Spirit is not abstract identity or oneness, but the union of separation and union. Accordingly, the negative moment is essential, for, without the negativity of otherness, the Absolute is empty and abstract. The theology of the understanding in its characterization of God in terms of the "most real of all beings" represents such an abstraction. By the elimination of all negation this attempt to define God is left with a concept of God devoid of content. Without the moment of otherness, without negation, there can only be abstraction:

> When the notion of God is apprehended only as that of the abstract or most real being, God is, as it were, relegated to another world beyond: and to speak of knowledge of him would be meaningless. When there is no definite quality, knowledge is impossible. _Mere light is mere darkness_.[21]

Through the process of negation the final positive moment is produced. For the Hegelian doctrine of God this means that God is not in himself; rather, only as contradicted by an other, and as this contradiction is in turn transmuted, is the positive determination of God completed. In himself, God is pure being, and, as such, he is abstract and undetermined. The true being of God is his Being-in-and-for-himself (_Anfürsichseyn_).

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[21] _The Logic_, p. 74 (italics mine).

c. God Is Spirit

The ultimate definition (die höchste Definition) of the Absolute is: "The Absolute is Spirit (Geist)."[22] In the same paragraph Hegel states that the word "Geist" and some general idea (Vorstellung) of the significance of Spirit was discovered at an early date in the Christian religion, and "the content of Christian religion is--God is given to be known as Spirit." In The Phenomenology Hegel makes the same statement--"the Absolute is Spirit"--and declares that when the Absolute Being is not grasped as Spirit the resultant understanding of God is an empty void without content or meaning, for lacking the movement or process of Spirit the Absolute is an empty self-identity.[23]

The word "Geist" and the use that Hegel makes of it is indicative of the fundamental religious orientation of his thought. Hegel's system is, as Erik Schmidt declares in his study Hegels Lehre von Gott, a living organism, in which all the parts are joined. And the link which joins them is Hegel's understanding of Absolute Spirit. His system is, fundamentally, a theology, a reasoning about God.[24] William Wallace

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[22] Werke, bd. V, Encyclopadie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften, hrsg. Lasson, p. 335.

[23] The Phenomenology, p. 767.

[24] Erik Schmidt, Hegels Lehre von Gott (Gutersloh, 1952), pp. 11 ff.

declares in an introductory essay to his translation of the last part of Hegel's Encyclopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften that Hegel's use of the term "Geist" "serves--and was no doubt meant to serve--as a sign of the conformity of his system with the religion which sees in God no other-world being, but our very self and mind, and which worships him in spirit and in truth."[25]

All that can be said with the presentation of God as the highest Being is that he is. God designated as essence takes on the added character of universal and irresistible power, a sovereign Lord. Depicted in terms of the religions of consciousness, God is regarded as the all pervasive substance of reality. The second way of depicting God is represented, according to Hegel, in the idea of God in Judaism and Mohammedanism. This is the beginning of a true knowledge of God, but only a beginning, since both Judaism and Mohammedanism have little or no place for the finite other. The Christian religion articulates the idea of the God who is Spirit. As so regarded, God is the Absolute, the notion conscious of itself in its object, spirit conscious of itself as Spirit. God as Spirit is this self-determination. Hegel declares, "God means this: to distinguish himself from himself, to be object for himself, yet in this distinction to be identical with himself--

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[25] Philosophy of Mind, p. L.

Spirit."[26]

Absolute Spirit realizes itself in spirit, or, as Hegel declares in the Encyclopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften, "The notion of Spirit has its reality in spirit."[27] As absolute Idea is realized, so also God is realized in self-determined manifestation of self for self. God as Absolute Spirit, in Hegel's interpretation of the Christian religion, accomplishes just this. Here the Absolute is real through the process of self-determination. The idea of Spirit is the unity of divine and human natures, the unity of the Idea in-itself and for-itself. Hegel declares that this is the active process whereby the unity is established--"the divine nature is itself simply this being of Absolute Spirit, therefore the unity of divine and human nature is itself the Absolute Spirit."[28]

The continued use of the word "Spirit" to translate "Geist" may tend to distort its significance and lead to the association of its meaning too closely with popular religious thought forms. The significance of "Geist" for Hegel is rational activity of the intellect, for Geist is mind. Hegel analyzes mind into an ascending pattern of three moments which

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26. Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 191.

27. Werke, bd. V, Encyclopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften, hrsg. Lasson, p. 474.

28. Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 210.

culminate in mind as reason. As reason, mind is the consciousness of its inherent and specific Being.[29] When mind has thus realized itself, "when this reason which spirit 'has,' is seen by spirit to be reason which actually is, to be reason which is actual in spirit, and is its world, then spirit has come to its truth; it is spirit . . . ."[30]

God is the Absolute Spirit (Geist), Spirit uniting the infinite and the finite. This is the activity of pure thought, the activity which is not outside itself, but is within the sphere of its own being.[31] The Absolute presents itself to itself in the form of consciousness of the Absolute in finite mind.

The idea of God depicted in the Christian religion is the perfect expression of the Absolute Spirit in the form of religion. Hegel declares--

> The Christian religion is the perfect religion, the religion in which the being of the Spirit itself is for itself, the religion which has become objective for itself. In it [the Christian religion] the universal and the particular Spirit is inseparable; the absolute identity of Infinite and the finite is this religion and its content.[32]

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[29] The Phenomenology, p. 459.

[30] Ibid., p. 460.

[31] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 228.

[32] Ibid., pp. 193-194.

Idea in-itself is opposed by the particularity of finite mind. This opposition is overcome and reconciliation established by mind becoming conscious of itself as Mind. This speculative statement takes on objective reference in the theological statements of the Christian religion.

The premise of Hegelian theology, God is Absolute Spirit, leads, however, to the conclusion that God does not exist in external manifestation for the sensuous consciousness, nor in the internal conviction of feeling by itself, but that God exists essentially for thought.[33] Therefore, the natural revelation of rational activity has priority over special revelation. The sensuous consciousness in its immediacy may carry intimations of the reality of God in outward events and the perception of these outward facts, but it cannot fully comprehend the reality of God. Consciousness which represents the Ultimate as Absolute Being in itself is also an imperfect expression of God, for it is totally abstract in its significance. The self-contained and self-determined process of reason--Idea in-itself, Idea in its otherness, Idea come back to itself in the conscious realization of the Mind--is the self-manifestation of Absolute Spirit.[34]

God as Spirit is "the self-contained and self-sufficient reality, however, which is at once aware of being actual, in

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[33] Ibid., p. 224.

[34] The Phenomenology, pp. 458-459.

the form of consciousness and presents itself to itself . . . ."[35] God as Spirit is not separated from man as spirit, but rather is the ground of finite spirit; and man is related to God, knows God in his consciousness, as an other which is united with himself as Spirit. Theology, as generally understood, Hegel writes, is assigned the task of analyzing God as objective, as absolutely separated from the subjective consciousness. This process he characterized as abstraction, for here God is regarded as an object isolated in himself, an object like other objects to be investigated and analyzed. "In contrast to this, the notion of absolute religion," Hegel insists, "can be so stated that what it has to do with is, not this external, but religion itself, that is, the unity of this image (Vorstellung) which we call God with the subject."[36]

The idea of God which Hegel accepts as the absolute characterization of God, and which he finds represented in the Christian religion, is not that of a spirit but spirit.[37] God

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[35] Ibid., p. 458.

[36] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 194.

[37] Hans Frei in his chapter on "Niebuhr's Theological Background" in the book Faith and Ethics presents a brief but penetrating analysis of the quest of the metaphysical Idealists and, in particular, the search of Hegel. The search, he declares, "was for the objective and immanent ground of unity underlying the cleavage entailed in the subject-object distinction in thought, a search for the unity underlying mind (or idea) and thing. To think of God meant to the Idealists going beyond the symbolism of religion into the immediacy and conceptual unity of concrete exemplication and logical possibility. God is the prius of both, equally far from and near

is the ground--both logically and ontologically regarded--of the finite; and as ground he is realized in the finite. This idea of God is the religious expression of the Hegelian solution to the problem of unity and wholeness. God for Hegel must be the absolute concrete reality. In the Hegelian system of logic, the Absolute is not in a world beyond the rational activity of mind but is the mind: "The Absolute is . . . directly before us, so present that so long as we think, we must, though without express consciousness of it, always carry it with us and always use it."[38] God is not a spirit confronting man as a wholly other, but is Spirit confronting man as spirit. Consequently, consciousness coming to know God is God conscious of himself in the finite. According to Hegel, the absolute and perfect religion--the Christian religion--presents God become objective for himself. In this religion, it is revealed what God is:

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to both. He is not a being, and therefore not an extramental 'other' confronting particularity or possibility. Rather, he is their ground, logically and ontologically prior to their separation. In God alone is the confluence of the truth and reality underlying individual things and persons. The transcendence of God is therefore not that of a sublime person separated from limited creatures. It is rather the transcendence of the ground of being and possibility which, as such, can never be the 'object' of particular knowledge but is the basis of all knowledge and the ground of all objective reality. He is eternally subject and as such alone the spiritual bond in which all finite contradictions are transcended and resolved" (Paul Ramsey, editor, Faith and Ethics [New York, 1957], p. 18).

[38] The Logic, p. 50.

> He is no longer a being removed (ein Jenseits), an unknown, for He has told men what He is, not merely in an external history, but in consciousness. We have here, therefore, the religion of the manifestation of God, since God knows Himself in finite spirit.[39]

Absolute Spirit is a final moment uniting thesis, God in himself, and the antithesis, the other of God, as the unity in separation and union. As Spirit, the Absolute is known not as self-sameness but as "the Whole which spirit is . . . ."[40] Considered as the whole, the idea of God as Spirit is "divine history, the process of self-differentiation, of diremption and this return into self . . . ."[41] For Hegel, this ultimate unity is, as Hans Frei suggests, at once given and yet to be realized.[42] Even as Spirit in itself is implicitly absolute and therefore contains all that is expressed in the concrete realization, so also Spirit awaits explicit articulation in its self as other. God as Spirit is absolute and concrete, he is in-himself and for-himself in the unity of Spirit characterized as an absolute totality. In Christianity, Hegel insists, God is realized in this truth, for in Christianity, God is exhibited as Absolute Spirit, realized and realizing himself in finite consciousness.

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[39] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, pp. 191-192.

[40] Ibid., p. 219. [41] Ibid.

[42] Faith and Ethics, p. 20.

2. The Personality of God

The dialectical character of the Hegelian system is, as has been noted, a protest against the indistinct oneness of an idea of God as Substance, or as most real Being. The point is made with simple clarity in the elementary triad of pure idea found in Hegel's logical treatises. The primal category "Being," by itself has no content, no distinction. It is only as "Being" is negated by its other that is has significance. "Being" isolated in-itself expresses simple self-identity which is the most abstract of all possible ideas. This category enunciates itself--"Being" or "isness." "Being" only acquires significance in correlation with its other--"Nothing." It is that which is simply other than nothing. From the synthesis of the two ideas the third category, "Becoming," is realized. It is the negation of the negation. According to the Hegelian analysis of idea, and of Reality as a whole, only by negation in an other is determined, meaningful content articulated.

When Hegel makes reference to the personality of God he is referring to the definite self-determination of God in his other. It is the nature of what Hegel calls personality to be characterized by the drive to abolish its isolation, its separateness, and to be in correlation with another.[43] Consciousness for Hegel has as its significance being-in-relation,

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[43] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 239.

relation to another. God as person and as consciousness has the same significance; as absolute Person, God is in relation to his other. The process of objectification in an other and reconciliation expresses the personalness of God. Hegel states that: "The truth of personality is accordingly, just this--to attain (personal being) through the submerging and remaining submerged in the other."[44]

The application of this understanding of the nature of personal being to God is coordinate with the idea of God as Spirit. "God is only God," Hegel writes, "in so far as he himself knows himself; his self knowledge is, further, his self-conscious being in man and the knowledge of man in God, which proceeds to the self-knowledge of man in God."[45] The self-conscious being (Selbstbewusstsein) is the being of God in concrete relation. As the Absolute Spirit, God's nature involves relationship, and the conscious realization of relationship describes the personal being of God. Personalness is the moment of reconciled Spirit--Absolute Spirit conscious of itself as Spirit.

One of the concepts in the development of the Idea in history which Hegel assigns to Christianity is the significance and value of the individual person. A particular person

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Werke, bd. V, Encyclopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften, hrsg. Lasson, p. 481.

in Christianity has an essential role to fulfill in revealing the Absolute; accordingly, the person is a moment of the Absolute. God himself in his personalness involves the moment of the particular. The particular person, as a result, is recognized as being a moment of reality. Particularity is to be negated, but not simply by being nullified; rather, as the negative moment of the Absolute, it is to be transmuted in the actualization of Spirit. In this negation (Aufheben) the person is destroyed as simple particularity and, at the same time, is continued in the higher level of self-conscious Spirit.[46]

The idea of God in the Christian religion conveys the idea of personality--"the Christian God is God not known merely, but also self-knowing; He is a personality not merely figured in our minds, but rather absolutely actual."[47] Personalness means that separation is replaced by Being-in-relation. This quality is one of the prerequisites for the judgment--the Absolute cannot be merely isolated, empty being, but must be Being-in-relation, related to its other, and therefore, determinate and definite.

Hegel's presentation of the personality of God is the theological formula of his position that Absolute Spirit is in-and-for-itself. Only that being who is not only conscious but also self-consciously in relation to an other is personal. Animals, for example, may be said to be conscious in that they

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[46] The Logic, p. 270. [47] Ibid., p. 271.

are sentient and receive impressions of objectivity. Man may also be said to possess animal awareness, but man in only truly man in being self-conscious, that is, in being conscious and reflectively conscious of this consciousness, in being aware of the activity of reason in the consciousness. Self-consciousness is self-possessed and self-determined subjectivity; subject and object are united in the personal self.

Hegel advocates and defends the idea of the personality of God. But the content he gives to the idea of the personality of God is self-consciousness in the Hegelian sense of separation and reunion of spirit in-and-for-itself. God is self-conscious in the activity of finite mind rationally comprehending absolute knowledge. The full expression of the personalness of God is Spirit conscious of itself as the concrete whole.

3. Activity of God

a. Idea is Active

Hegel's analysis of pure idea in his logical writings is more than a manipulation of categories in a systematic manner; it serves his system as a metaphysical statement of the real and the true. The metaphysics of idea explicated in Science of Logic is distinctive as a logical and ontological system in its presentation of a dynamic process of idea. Hegelian logic advances from the category of "Being" to the "Absolute Idea"

by the process of the self-realization of Idea in the dialectic of antithesis and synthesis. Richard Kroner observes that the science which reveals the determination of idea "deviates from all former conceptions and schemes of logic: it moves. Thought is made mobile."[48] This logic of the self-determination of Idea by negation contrasts, Hegel asserts, with the logic of understanding which is content with determination of the categories in fixed self-identity.

The categories which form the material of Hegel's logic are not empty, isolated distinctions but moments in the process of the actualization of Idea, the rational articulation of reality. Accordingly, the self-determination of idea, the logic of Hegel, is, as Richard Kroner notes, "a logic not only of knowledge, of thought, of the living self, but also of Being, Existence, and Reality."[49]

In undertaking "the labor of the notion," Hegel was attempting to provide a logical foundation for the determined whole of reality. The active self-movement of notion leads ultimately in Hegelian thought to the perfect moment of Idea in-itself, the absolute Idea. From this moment of pure thought, by its own self-determination, arises its negation--finite materiality and particularity. Thought and existence are correlated in the Hegelian system. Logic, for Hegel, "shows the

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[48] "Introduction," Early Theological Writings, p. 30.

[49] Ibid., p. 31.

elevation of the Idea to that stage from which it becomes the creator of Nature and passes over to the form of a concrete immediacy, the Notion of which, however, breaks this mould too when, as concrete Spirit, it becomes itself."[50]

Logic is the science of the Idea in itself, realizing itself through the process of determination in an other. God in himself, that is God before creation of his other, corresponds to the analysis of "_Absolute_ _Form_, which is totality in itself and contains the pure idea of truth itself."[51] Both Idea and God are self-determining active principles which determined themselves in concrete objectification and, finally, in the reconciliation in which the Absolute is realized. Idea is essentially active, determining itself by its very nature:

> The Idea itself is the dialectic which forever divides and distinguishes the self-identical from the differentiated, the subjective from the objective, the finite from the infinite, soul from body. Only on these terms is it an eternal creation, eternal vitality, and eternal spirit.[52]

Idea is at once the content of the logic and the process. Correspondingly, God, in Hegel's system, is essentially active process.

The actuality of Absolute Mind is Idea. The rational incorporates the whole of reality. Mind is not simply descriptive of God; Mind, for Hegel, is God. And the activity of

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[50] _Science_ _of_ _Logic_, II, 227.

[51] _Ibid_.

[52] _The_ _Logic_, p. 356.

mind, the self-determination of the notion, the dialectic of the idea, denotes the activity of God. Idea in itself is not simple identity but is active and self-determining; God in himself is not abstract being, self-sameness, but is self-determination. God is active Spirit distinguishing, determining itself in its negation by finite spirit, and uniting itself and its other in absolute knowledge.

b. Freedom of the Absolute

Freedom, as Hegel interprets it, signifies self-determination. The free mind is the self-determined mind. It has itself for its own object and is self-determined in the knowledge of the object. This is spirit aware of itself as Spirit, and, in its absolute moment, it is similar to the freedom articulated by Spinoza in terms of "the intellectual love of God."[53] In the moral realm, freedom signifies the autonomy of the true individual; freedom, in this sense, is not caprice but self-determination by the universal right.[54]

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[53] Hegel makes this comparison himself in The Logic: "Man is most independent when he knows himself to be determined by the absolute idea throughout. It was this phase of mind and conduct which Spinoza called Amor intellectualis Dei" (p. 283).

[54] This distinction between the right will of determination by the universal is clearly in the line of Kantian ethical thought. Selfish determination of the particular is the immoral, while the determination by the universal is true morality and freedom. However, the Hegelian position is distinct in the presentation of the unity of that which determines and is determined.

Thus freedom does not mean the repudiation of all determination. Rather, as is clearly explicated in the analysis of Science of Logic, it is self-determination. In this manner, Hegel makes the point that necessity is transfigured into freedom--"This truth of necessity, therefore, is Freedom."[55] Freedom for Hegel "pre-supposes necessity and contains it as an unsubstantial element in itself."[56] He illustrates his thesis by representing a truly good man as being free in the sense that he is determined to right conduct by the obligation of his own nature. The truth of necessity is the comprehension of the determination by self, and such determination is the essential significance of freedom.

In the closing paragraph of Science of Logic, Hegel describes the freedom of Absolute Idea. Idea is free as the self-determining process of negation and synthesis. "The idea," Hegel insists, "freely releases itself in absolute self-security and self-repose."[57] This is the absolute freedom of determinateness, that is, the Idea determined solely by itself. God is Absolute Idea; he is the self-determined necessity. As such, he is the absolutely free concrete Ultimate. God is by and in himself.

Idea is the *prius* of all else. From Idea and its self-determination the concrete whole develops. It is a mistake,

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[55] The Logic, p. 282. [56] Ibid., p. 283.

[57] Science of Logic, II, 486.

Hegel argues, to see the objective realm as the source of reality. The subjective agency of finite mind does not create itself by the process of abstracting the categories from the object. That which is, is rational, for the world of finite thing and conscious being is produced by the self-determination of the notion, by its objectification in its other.

Hegel translates the free activity of Notion into religious language in terms of the activity of God in creation. Absolute self-determined freedom, the activity of the Absolute as originating what is other than itself, is expressed in the Christian doctrine of a creator God:

> In religious language we express this by saying that God created the world out of nothing. In other words, the world and finite things have issued from the fullness of the divine thoughts and the divine decrees. Thus religion recognises thought and (more exactly) the notion to be the infinite form, or the free creative activity, which can realise itself without help of a matter that exists outside it.[58]

The priority of God is the priority of the notion of the system; accordingly, in the free creative activity of the self-determined Absolute, the world comes to be. There is nothing outside of God determining God; he is absolutely self-determined, and therefore free.

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[58] The Logic, p. 294.

c. The Moment of Negation

In the logical analysis of Hegel, "Being" is the ultimately simple category. "Becoming" is something rather than nothing. The content consists in this movement--that pure being, which is immediate and simple, issues in a distinction, "nothing," and that this distinction in turn cancels itself in a higher synthesis.[59] This process of the first triad of idea is a microcosm of the whole of reality. It does not matter, for the integrity of this system, whether he begins with the ultimately simple category in the analysis of the Idea, or whether he begins with the concept of God. One is implicitly what the other is explicitly.

Notion (Begriff), self-determining Idea realizing itself, is the philosophical equivalent for God. The concept, in its simple moment, is abstract idea, but in the Hegelian system, the idea in its abstract moment is not static but active. The notion is thus for Hegel the "inward living principle of all reality." T. M. Knox states that the background of the notion in Hegel's thought is theological, "the concept is his philosophical equivalent for the wisdom and so for the creative power of God."[60]

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[59] Science of Logic, I, 104.

[60] "Translator's Foreword," Philosophy of Right, pp. viii-ix.

The notion is constituted by "the diremption of the negativity."[61] This negative moment is essential to the concrete statement of Idea. Without negation, idea is simply in itself. The concrete whole that is Reality exhibits this dialectical process. By the negation of existence in self, by the negation of abstract universality, "Spirit has come to light in the form of pure universality of knowledge, which is self-consciousness as self-consciousness."[62]

The particular is a moment of the living whole which is the true Absolute. It is related to the universal in itself as the moment of judgment (Urtheil) or division into its other. Idea results in its negation by inherent contradiction. Correspondingly, integral to the divine Spirit is the movement to objectify itself, to realize itself in its other.

God in-himself is God before the creation of nature and finite spirit.[63] The activity of God is his self-objectification in an other. However, the other which is articulated is not absolutely separated from God in this process or activity of negation. The separation is rather that of a moment of the whole, the moment of contradiction which is necessary for the comprehension of the full content of a thesis in its ultimate synthesis. Without the negative moment of other, the notion

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[61] The Phenomenology, p. 796.

[62] Ibid., p. 797.

[63] Science of Logic, I, 60.

is unconstituted; correspondingly, without the otherness of his creation, God is simply in-himself and therefore only implicitly the Absolute Spirit.

In the transition to his discussion of objectivity in Science of Logic,[64] Hegel uses the ontological proof of the existence of God as an illustration of the nature of the process of objectification.[65] The inference from the notion of God to his existence, according to Hegel, illustrates the point that objectivity is not known in its isolation but rather can only be known as process of the relation of subject-object. The transition of the notion into objectivity, as the transition of the notion of God into existence, is predicated upon the activity of thought passing into its other. The logical course of the objectification of the notion is the subject's

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[64] Ibid., II, 343 ff.

[65] Hegel discusses the subject of the proof for the existence of God from his general conviction that man is essentially a thinker. Hegel will not surrender the ability of the mind to reach the Universal and therefore he insists upon a form of proof. Existence, as narrowly conceived in terms of being, is too poor a concept. The perspective which starts from the external and empirical is inadequate to the expression of the proofs of God's reality. The basis for this achievement is rather the thinking analysis of the world in which thought recognizes the essential rational structure of the reality. "And what men call the proofs of God's existence," Hegel writes, "are, rightly understood, ways of describing and analysing the native course of the mind, the course of thought thinking the data of the senses. The rise of thought beyond the world of sense, its passage from the finite to the infinite . . . is thought and nothing but thought. Say there is to be no such passage, and you say there is to be no thinking" (The Logic, p. 103).

activity. The objectification of the Absolute is the activity of the absolute determination of God in himself for himself. The determination is not accomplished by an objective God to whom predicates are assigned, but by the realization of God himself.

God is, and is known, in his activity. Specifically, he is to be received as self-determination in the objectivity or otherness of mind. "God as living God, and still more as Absolute Spirit, is recognized only in his activity."[66] This activity Hegel describes as the "Notion-forming cognition of his activity."[67] The notion describes the self-relating negativity. This thought is thought not as finite particularity, but as infinite activity, God in-and-for-himself in the rational activity of man.

In terms of Hegel's interpretation of the Christian religion, the moment of negation is the activity of objectification in the world and finite spirits. This is the eternal creation of God, the creation of God out of his very nature determining himself. As the determination of God, the world is not cut off in itself. It is the other or negative moment of God. God as absolute spirit is perfected, explicitly realized, through negation of this separation or objectification, in the synthesis of mind conscious of itself as Absolute Mind.

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[66] *Science of Logic*, II, 344.

[67] *Ibid*.

The idea of revelation, which Hegel uses to express the self-differentiation in mind, is perfected in the imagery of the Christian religion. The Christian understanding of revelation is that revelation is the self-manifestation of God to man. This Hegel adopts and then transposes its meaning into the dialectic of the system. God is Spirit. Therefore, self-manifestation is essential to his nature. God reveals himself in his self-objectification in an other. Hegel states his understanding of the essential significance of revelation in terms of this eternal activity:

> This is the notion, . . . the absolute idea: Reality is Spirit which is for Spirit, which has itself for the object. So this religion is revealed religion--God revealing himself. Revelation means the determination (Urtheil) of infinite form, to determine oneself, Being for an other. This self-manifestation belongs to the essence of Spirit itself. Spirit which is not revealed is not Spirit. In saying God has created the world, one represents creation as a single act which does not reoccur, [they represent it] as a determination which could or could not have happened--God has revealed himself, he could, however, have not revealed himself--and accordingly, this is like a willful, chance determination which does not belong to the notion of God. But God as Spirit is essentially this self-revelation. He creates the world not one time (ein Mal) but he is an eternal creator, this eternal self-revelation, eternal act! This is his notion, his determination.[68]

Insofar as Christianity presents itself as revealed religion, religion which has as its content the revelation of God to man in his self-objectification in the world and in man, it is, therefore, the absolute and perfect expression of the

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[68] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, pp. 197-198 (italics mine).

nature of reality. The form which this faith assumes in the religious consciousness is imperfect by virtue of the outward mechanical perspective of a record of events and persons, but its true content expresses the reality of Spirit as the self-manifestation of the Absolute in the otherness of the finite.

d. Process and Result

The contingent is that which is not determined by itself but by something else. The antonym of "contingent" is "necessary." The necessary is that which is what it is through itself. The derivative, the determined moment, still contains the antecedent from whence it is derived as an element in itself. This is the ideal progression which Hegel seeks to articulate in his analysis of Idea. Both the negative moment, or antithesis, and the positive moment, or synthesis, partake of the nature of this process. The completed moment is at once that which is realizing itself through the process and realized in the concrete whole; it is both process and result.

Objective world and finite mind, viewed from the Hegelian schema, are determined through the necessity of the self-determination of the Absolute. What exists absolutely for Hegel is the union of essence and existence, the unity of form and content. This is the actuality of the Absolute Mind. The form is the speculative knowing, that is, Idea as known; the content is reason in existence, Reason as the Truth in-and-for-itself. To comprehend what is, in this sense, is the task of

philosophy, for philosophy is the science of the Idea, and what is, is rational.[69]

God alone, Hegel insists, is the perfect harmony of notion and reality.[70] God, in the Hegelian system, is not a being separated from the world in a realm beyond the finite, but he is Spirit manifest in the world. The world is the objectification of Idea, and as such, it partakes of the rationality of the Divine Idea. The finite, limited by what is other than itself, involves untruth because its notion and existence do not correspond. But the finite as the other of God is not determined by anything outside itself; it is determined by God. As so determined, it is an expression of the Ultimate. The Idea-in-itself determines itself in its otherness for-itself, in order to bring to complete realization the moment when the Absolute Idea is perfected in-and-for-itself.

In the language of his philosophy, Hegel makes this point in the pronouncement: "What is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational." The religious form of this statement is the doctrine of the divine government of the world, the understanding of God active in the world. T. M. Knox, in a note on the dictum quoted above, suggests that Hegel's doctrine that the rational is actual and the actual is rational "depends ultimately on his faith in God's Providence, his conviction

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[69] Philosophy of Right, p. 11.

[70] The Logic, p. 52.

that history is the working out of His rational purpose. That purpose, as the purpose of the Almighty, is not so impotent as to remain a mere ideal or aspiration, and conversely, what is genuinely actual or effective in the world is simply the working out of that purpose."[71] Hegel makes this association himself in The Logic when he says that religion's doctrine of the divine government of the world affirms the propositions that the rational is actual and the actual is rational.[72] These statements, Hegel also says, presuppose the position that God is actual, that he is the supreme actuality.

This idea of development Hegel finds expressed in the Christian view of history and the doctrine of divine providence. But the working out of God's purposes in history is too neat an association for the actual content of Hegel's analysis. The problem suggested by his rationale of reality is the problem of the Christian religion's fundamental distinction between the governor and the governed in the course of world history. No such radical distinction exists for Hegel.

The truth, Hegel affirms, is the whole.[73] But this whole is not an abstract universal; it essentially involves a correlation. The truth is realized through a dialectical process, a process of mediation through negation and synthesis. It is

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[71] Philosophy of Right, p. 302.

[72] The Logic, p. 10.

[73] The Phenomenology, p. 81.

"self-identity working itself out through an active self-directed process; or, in other words, it is a reflection into self, the aspect in which the ego is for itself, objective to itself."[74] The process of working itself out articulates the moments which compose the whole. The whole reaches its full expression through this self-contained and self-determined process. It is both a process and a result. "Of the Absolute it must be said," Hegel states, "that it is essentially _a result, that only at the end is it what it is in very truth_; and just in that consists its nature, which is to be actual, subject, or self-becoming, self-development."[75] This process is in Hegel's estimation "nothing but self-identity working itself out through an active self-directed process . . . ."[76]

The activity of God is essential to his nature in the Hegelian analysis. Consequently, Spirit is only as it is active.[77] What is true, what is ideal, exists only as completed process for Hegel. It is the whole of the parts. The Universal, or God in himself, is thought considered in-itself, the concepts themselves apart from thinking them; the Universal for-itself, or God in his other, is thought in the finite spirit, conscious thought in the particular mind; the true and ultimate Universal, or God as Spirit, is thought in the finite

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[74] _Ibid_., p. 82.

[75] _Ibid_., pp. 81-82 (italics mine). [76] _Ibid_.

[77] _Werke_, bd. XV, _Philosophie der Religion_, pp. 90 ff.

conscious of itself as Universal, as Absolute.

The other is essential to the existence of God as Spirit, for the Absolute in its true nature is both process and result; it is realized and realizing itself in its other. The statement of this dynamic nature of the Hegelian Absolute needs to be stronger than what is implied in the phrase "Activity of God." A more adequate statement of his position is the proposition--the activity as a whole is God.

4. The Triune God

The totality of Hegel's system presents an active, ideological organism; it is a complex of parts interrelated in an active unity of idea. The dialectical process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis pervades the entire Hegelian presentation of reality. This threefold dialectic is first considered as a trinity of idea, and then as the triune nature of reality. Erik Schmidt, describing Hegel's system as "ein lebendiger Organismus," asserts that:

> The concrete truth for Hegel is not a simple unity, but a trinity which at the same time is a unity. The truth can be represented only in a system of three parts. God as the absolute truth is therefore a trinity. The secret of God is the dialectic. God is first in his eternal in-self-being (Insichsein) (the thesis), secondly in his other-being (Anderssein) (the antithesis), and thirdly in his return to himself (the synthesis). That is, God is the in-himself enclosed God as idea, he posits or creates the other of himself as the world, and he returns out of this other to himself and becomes therefore for spirit. God as eternal in-self-being is the system of the eternal determination of God or the Logos; God as other-being is the world separated from God--nature and finite

spirit--in so far as it stands in opposition to God; God in his return to himself is the elevation of the finite spirit to God in art, religion and philosophy. We compare this more general concept of God of Hegel with his philosophical system and thus find about the same triad: the science of logic, the philosophy of nature and that of spirit.[78]

a. Triune Nature of Idea

The recurring triads in the Hegelian logical system are enclosed in a whole of three parts. The _Science of Logic_ is a trinity, one in idea, three in the ideas denoted. The three moments of the logical idea are: (1) Being, (2) Essence, (3) Notion. The pattern of the dialectic controls Hegel's logic. Being, for example, is examined in terms of quality, quantity, and measure; Quality in terms of Being, Determinate Being and Being for Self. The culminate moment repeats the same trinitarian pattern with inquiry into Subjective Notion, Objective Notion, and Idea.

The dynamics of Idea are the threefold dialectical determination. Progression is not an unconnected movement from one category to another, nor a leap by suggestion to another idea; rather, the contradiction inherent in the thesis as stated, the first moment of each triad, finds expression in the second moment, the antithesis. The movement to the second and to the third level in each category considered is an internal movement

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[78] _Hegels Lehre von Gott_, pp. 11-12.

of idea itself, a movement not to just any other but a movement in idea to its own other. Idea determines itself in its other. As such, it is idea for-itself. Then in the synthetic moment, it realizes its actual content and the pattern begins again.[79]

In its immediacy the category "Being" is implicitly "Notion." It is related to the full flowering of the Idea as the seed to the bloom. The second moment is mediation, the other of the idea--its determinate and determining distinction. The final stage represents the moment when Idea is realized. Its content is manifested by the separation into its other and return to itself out of the contrast or distinction. Idea is first in-itself and then for-itself, and, finally, it is in-and-for-itself:

> The beginning was the universal; the result is the individual, the concrete, and the subject; what the former is _in itself_, the latter now is equally _for itself_; the universal is _posited_ in the subject . . . . For us the Notion itself is (1) the universal which is in itself, (2) the negative which is for itself, and (3) the third term, which is in and for itself, the universal which runs through all the moments of the syllogism. But the third term is the conclusion, in which it mediates itself with itself through its negativity, and is thus posited for itself as the universal and the identity of its moments.[80]

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[79] _Science of Logic_, II, 472-473.

[80] _Ibid_., pp. 479-480.

A most significant issue for the idea of God is raised by Hegel's presentation of the triune nature of idea. The problem focuses on the relation of the three stages or moments of idea. The dialectic of idea is self-determination of idea in itself; regarded as concrete whole, the content is Idea realizing itself. It is a unity, a oneness of idea, expressing itself in a triplicity. The separation is that of contrast as other, not as absolute contrariety. The moments of the advance of the idea are distinct and distinguishable, but they are not discrete and isolated; they are diverse expressions of a unified whole.

The first two moments of the triplicity of the dialectic, in all the various expressions which Hegel gives to it, are in themselves, and, as far as the dialectic of the particular triad is concerned, abstract. Therefore they are false. For this very reason, Hegel asserts, the dialectical movement is continuous in the idea because it is its nature to realize itself, to become concrete.[81] The true notion, as was noted earlier, is the result, the coming back to itself of Idea, the whole of the triad. The synthesis of each dialectical movement is a result. The beginning is the universal; the result is the individual as realized through the negativity of the middle term. Discussing this relation of the stages of the logical idea, Hegel asserts that, "Truth comes only with the

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[81] Ibid.

notion . . . ." By this he means, in the precise language of the logical system--

> the notion is the truth of being and essence, both of which, when separately maintained in their isolation, cannot but be untrue, the former because it is exclusively immediate, and the latter because it is exclusively mediate.[82]

This relation of the stages of the logical idea, as it carries over into the concept of God, suggests, accordingly, that the other of God--the world and the finite spirit--are in themselves abstract and unreal. But they represent a stage in process of the realization of the Absolute. They are not finally separated from the Absolute but are moments of a continuous whole, moments of a process of the dialectical trinity which is God. In their difference from God, Hegel insists, they are untrue.[83] But even more important is the conclusion that God in himself is not truly God except as he mediates himself in his other; the final moment, the moment of the reconciliation of Spirit, is the reality of the Absolute. Even as Absolute idea is a result, so also, God, for Hegel, is the Absolute only in his completion.

b. Triune Nature of Reality

Hegel's cyclopedic statement of reality is expressed in a system of three parts--The Logic which is the system of the

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[82] The Logic, p. 155.

[83] Ibid.

self-determining Idea in itself; *The Philosophy of Nature* which is the science of Idea objectified in the world; *The Philosophy of Mind* which is Idea in the Mind as conscious of itself. The various special disciplines--e.g. *Science of Logic*, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, *Philosophy of Right*, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, *The Philosophy of Religion*--all belong to the system as specialized investigations of particular phases or moments of the whole of reality.

The threefold analysis of reality is united by virtue of its being the development of Idea from its implicit moment in self to its explicit moment in Mind. The first moment of Mind is the moment of universality (*Allgemeinheit*) which is the sphere of pure thought, the ideal totality of Idea in itself. This moment of universality has its being in its own self. It determines itself in the activity of particularization. The second moment is the moment of particularity (*Besonderheit*). Spirit is now for itself; mind in its universality negates itself in the particular. In this its essential activity, the activity which lies behind the reality of the objective, the Universal or Absolute in self does not manifest something external to itself; rather, the significance of the universal is involved in the correlation. The second moment is thus one with the first, but one with it as the other of the Universal, the other which gives to the Universal its determination. As such, the moment of particularity is the moment of judgment (*Urtheil*) or the breaking up of the indefinite universal into

particular forms of manifestation. This is the origin of the antithesis of finitude. The final moment is the moment of individuality (Einzelheit). In this stage the universal is removed from the abstraction of pure idea in itself to its actuality in the self-conscious mind. Through the process of mediation, Reality itself, as indwelling in the self-conscious being of Spirit, the being of Spirit in-and-for-itself, is brought forth.[84]

The three moments of Reality delineated by Hegel are thus: "eternal Being in and by itself, the form of universality; the form of manifestation, that of particularization, Being for another; the form of the return from manifestation into itself, absolute individuality."[85] The three stages are illustrated by Hegel in the figures of space and time. First, as illustrated by space, or place, the divine history, the history of Spirit realizing itself, occurs in its original moment outside of history, apart from all finitude, in the very being of the absolute; the second as expressed in the actual world in definite existence; finally, the third stage, the concrete expression, is in the spiritual community existing first in the world and raised by Spirit to the Absolute. In terms of time, the triadic analysis of reality is illustrated in moment of

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[84] Werke, bd. V, Encyclopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften, hrsg. Lasson, pp. 482 ff.

[85] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 219.

God beyond time as he is in his eternal idea; in its second moment, as God in time in terms of past appearances of the historical as usually regarded; and in its final moment as the now of the present joined to eternal.[86]

Reality is a result of a process of mediation. It is a unity but not a unity of oneness; it is not an absolute substance. It is rather a unity in difference, a unity of three in one. The repeated insistence of Hegel is that the Absolute is not immediate but mediated, that the Absolute is a result, and only as a result is it what it is in truth. The Absolute is Spirit, and as Spirit, it is trinitarian in nature, for the spiritual involves the distinction into otherness, and the reunion of the moments of distinction. The triune nature of reality is in-itself, for-itself, and in-and-for-itself.

c. The Triune God

Hegel's Philosophy of Religion binds rational analysis of idea to forms of religion by translating these forms into their idea content. Religion is made to conform to idea, and, in the process, what Hegel regarded as the natural affinity of Idea and the content of religion is revealed.

This rationalistic analysis of religion finds reality expressed in the concept of a triune God. The faith of the

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[86] Ibid., p. 220.

absolute and perfect religion points to the Absolute in-and-for-itself, it recognizes Spirit as it truly is. "God is recognized as Spirit," Hegel declares, "only when known as the Triune."[87] The realization of this idea, he goes on to declare, is the axis on which the history of the world turns, it is "the goal and starting point of History."[88] This is true of the articulation of idea, for in this moment, Spirit is conscious of itself as Spirit.

The abstract Absolute of the metaphysics of the understanding, when expressed in the form of religion, designates the Absolute as the eternal One. According to Hegel, this is simply empty ideality. By contrast, the thinking spirit "grasps the truth as a concretion, as fullness of content, as ideality, in which the determinateness, the finite, is contained as a moment."[89] For Mind as Reason, Hegel maintains, the Absolute is not an empty unity but is Spirit. When the nature of Spirit unfolds itself to rational thought, God is apprehended "as essentially the Trinity." This means that "God is comprehended as making Himself an object for himself, while the object remains identical with God; in this distinction God loves Himself. Without this Trinitarian determination, God would not be Spirit, and Spirit would be an empty word."[90]

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[87] Philosophy of History, p. 319.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, pp. 47-48.

[90] Ibid., p. 48.

"God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of Nature and of a finite spirit" is the equivalent in the form of religion to the realm of pure thought, the system of pure reason articulated in the logic of Hegel.[91] This is God in his being in-himself, the Absolute Form, the Absolute Idea. In the _Philosophy of Religion_, Hegel uses the traditional Christian form of God the Father to describe this moment of the Absolute. Hegel calls it "the Kingdom of the Father" and states that here God exists in thought, he is simply pure ideality in immediate unity with itself.[92] God is here ultimate rationality.

God as he is in his other, in the moment of the son, is the second person of the Hegelian trinity. Otherness is the determination of God, the determination of the Absolute in its other. God is objectified in this the second moment of triadic reality. "The Kingdom of the Son," as Hegel designates this state, has a confused broad and narrow denotation. Both involve the same essential significance, although the references differ. In the broader denotation, this second moment of the triune reality refers to all otherness--to the world and to the finite spirit as such. All this that is other than God, all this that represents the creation, the process of objectification, belongs to the second moment, the moment of

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[91] _Science of Logic_, I, 60.

[92] _Werke_, bd. XVI, _Philosophie der Religion_, p. 221.

the Son. The Absolute includes this negative moment of otherness in its realization, for without the distinction of the other, Absolute Idea, Absolute Being is a complete abstraction. "The Kingdom of the Son," Hegel declares in explicating absolute religion, is "the moment of particularization in general."[93] In the narrower denotation, the second moment involves the ideological content which Hegel associates with the historical event regarded as all important by the Christian religion--Jesus Christ. Herein God in his otherness is represented in the form of pictorial images or general imaginative concepts as coming into the world in his son. The true significance, however, is not the factual history, but rather the divine history, the history of the realization of the Absolute for-itself in the second moment of the triune Absolute.

The third moment of the triune God is the moment of the realization of Absolute Spirit, the moment of the self-consciousness of Spirit as Spirit, the moment of the reunion or reconciliation of the other. This is what Hegel calls "the Kingdom of the Spirit" or spiritual community. This third moment is the Idea in the specific character of the Hegelian term "individuality"--the union of the universal and the particular. The unity of the three moments or stages of the triad is Spirit. Spirit is only truly Absolute as this unity; for Hegel, "the universal spirit, the whole which Spirit is,

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[93] Ibid.

posits itself in these three determinations, develops itself, realises itself . . . . It is at first as a whole; it explicates itself (completes its full nature) only in the end."[94] God exists first of all as the Absolute in-himself, then as the Absolute for-himself, and finally, as the Absolute in-and-for-himself.

The Christian religion bears witness to Absolute Spirit in its doctrine of the Trinity, but this witness is imperfect in form by virtue of its reference to particularity. But even in this imperfect form, Christian doctrine depicts the perfect content of reality, the Being-in-and-for-itself (An-Fürsich-seyn) of Absolute Spirit. Here in faith, Hegel asserts:

> the first and foremost moment is Absolute Being, spirit absolutely self-contained, so far as it is simple eternal substance. [God the Father] But in the process of realizing its constitutive notion, which consists in being spirit, that substance passes over into a form where it exists for an other; its self-identity becomes actual Absolute Being, actualized in self-sacrifice; it becomes a self, but a self that is transitory and passes away. [the God-Man, the Christ] Hence the third stage is the return of self thus alienated, the substance thus abased, into its first primal simplicity. Only when this is done is spirit presented and manifested as spirit. [God the Absolute Spirit, the Holy Spirit][95]

The Christian understanding of God is thus, for Hegel, distinctive among world religions in its articulation of the absolute nature of God. The God of Christian theology is not

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[94] Ibid., p. 219.

[95] The Phenomenology, pp. 554-555.

abstract oneness but a Trinity--a unity of separation and union. The essential content of the doctrine is the accurate and concrete presentation of the truth of Idea, the unity constituted by distinction. In this manner Hegel identifies the Christian doctrine of God as three in one with the triune character of Idea. But in his explication of the doctrine of God, it is not Christian theology, but the dialectic itself which is determinative.

According to the dialectical process synthesis is the truth of thesis and antithesis. The first two moments contain and are contained by the third. From this interpretation of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in terms of Idea, it follows, as John McTaggart notes, that the Holy Spirit is the final reality of the Trinity. God the Father, the thesis, and God the Son, the antithesis, are moments in the nature of God the Holy Spirit. "The Father and the Son," McTaggart writes, "are related to the Holy Ghost as something which is they, and more than they. But the Holy Ghost is related to the Father and the Son--if it is to be called a relation--in a different manner. Each of them, so far as it is real at all, is the Holy Ghost. But each of them is less than the Holy Ghost. And so are both of them taken together."[96] The result of the dialectical process is not three but one. The truth is the whole, a unity in which moments can be distinguished.

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[96] J. M. E. McTaggart, Studies in Hegelian Cosmology (Cambridge, 1901), p. 205.

The triune Godhead in itself is adjudged by Hegel to represent the realm of pure idea. As such it is the first principle of reality which in itself is, however, abstract universality. Pure Idea is implicitly and potentially the Absolute, but it is only truly the Absolute in the completion of its potentiality. The implications of this interpretation of the nature of God lead to the conclusion that the Triune God is imperfect, abstract in himself. God only has reality in his dialectical determination.

The negative moment of objective otherness involves the determination of the Absolute in the finite. Here also the logical analysis is basic. The separation is that of idea in-itself becoming actual in that which is idea for-itself. There is no radical discontinuity but unity involving distinction. Narrowly conceived in theology as a doctrine of the Son, this is a presentation of the essential unity of the Son and the Father. But as broadly conceived by Hegel, the moment of the other or "The Kingdom of the Son" represents the distinction or judgment of God into the otherness of the world and finite spirit. This moment of the whole is not, certainly Hegel would insist, an overflowing of Absolute Being or an emanation in a chain of being; it is the opposite, the other of God. But in the Hegelian schema of triune reality, it is not simply the opposite, it is the objectification of God. Spirit is one in itself and in its other; it is the human spirit and the Divine Spirit both essentially united as Geist.

A crucial issue raised by this analysis is the relation of this general moment of the manifestation of God to what the Christian theology holds to be the particular and distinct moment of the manifestation of God in the person of Jesus Christ.[97]

The unity of the three moments alone is the Absolute Spirit for Hegel. To apprehend the nature of Spirit it is necessary to view Spirit as the climactic, culminate moment of a process. Accordingly, God as Spirit is the whole of a process. The moment of Spirit is the absolute moment, but it is such by virtue of the realization of the content of the other two moments. Only as the end result does the Hegelian triad become Absolute Spirit in the sense of being self-determined, conscious Spirit.

The basic difficulty involved in the Hegelian interpretation of the Christian doctrine of a triune God is the fact that, as Hegel presents this doctrine, it is a Trinity not of three persons but of three moments. The Hegelian Trinity is a unified organism exhibiting a dialectical triplicity. This difficulty is but one aspect of the problems involved in Hegel's explication of the idea of the Christian religion in the light of his systematic presentation of the unity and wholeness of Reality. The problem is explicitly represented in the fact that God for Hegel is not a Being but universal principle of

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[97] This will be discussed in the chapter devoted to the consideration of the Hegelian interpretation of the idea of the incarnation.

reality, the Ground of Being, that God is not a Spirit but Spirit, that God is not personal but rather exhibits personalness, that God, in this system, is not an active creator but is the activity itself. The Absolute, as Hegel interprets it, is not really a Trinity but the essential dialectical triplicity of the whole.

Chapter IV

THE IDEA OF THE INCARNATION

The simple content of absolute religion is, Hegel asserts, the idea of the incarnation of Divine Being (Menschwerdung des göttlichen Wesens).[1] The Christian witness to God manifest in Jesus Christ clearly formulates this content, but, while the idea of the incarnation is perfected in the Christian religion, it is not the exclusive possession of the Christian religion. Religion in its very nature involves the relating of the Infinite to the finite, therefore, the thought of incarnation, in one form or another, pervades historical religions.[2] The uniqueness of the Christian religion is that here, for the first time in the development of religion, the full and

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[1] Werke, bd. II, Phãnomenologie des Geistes, p. 577.

[2] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, p. 93.

complete content of the idea of the incarnation is set forth, here religious consciousness expresses Absolute Idea.

The basic point of reference for Hegel's interpretation of the doctrine of God incarnate in Jesus Christ is certainly not a historical event. A Jesus who lived, was crucified, and rose from the dead, a Jesus who inspired the faith of the New Testament writers, is of little actual importance for Hegel. He establishes his judgment of the absoluteness of Christianity not on the basis of what has happened in the past, nor what is recorded in the Scripture, nor what the church has stated in its creeds. The point to be determined, the criterion of the validity of the judgment, is whether the content depicted in the doctrine of the incarnation represents the Truth in the form of religious consciousness. The only valid test of doctrine of the incarnation is whether it represents Mind as a self-determining whole. If it does this, then the Christian religion is the perfect and complete expression of religion.

The ideological system is preeminent here, as elsewhere, in Hegel's interpretation of Christian doctrine. What is unique in Hegel's thought, Emil Brunner notes, is that he is able, or more accurately, seems to be able, to absorb history into thought.[3] Hegel follows the witness of Christian faith to the centrality of the incarnation. This is the pivotal

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[3] Emil Brunner, The Mediator, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia, 1947), p. 37.

point to which everything which precedes points and from which everything that follows proceeds. But because the incarnation for Hegel signifies not a person, not an event, but the idea content of the developing consciousness of Mind, the content of the doctrine is not perfected in Jesus Christ but in the Absolute self-consciousness of Mind. Thus history, interpreted in terms of the system, becomes Idea. Consequently, Hegel's attempted reconciliation of reason and the Christian religion takes the form of the distilling of an idea content. References to the story of Jesus Christ are used simply to illustrate the Idea.

The result is a content which is not specifically Christian but universal truth. It refers not to a special, a particular historical revelation, but to a general revelation. Man as particular consciousness needs to be saved, for he is, as such, alienated from Universal Mind, but man does not necessarily need a Savior. What is necessary is a principle of mediation reconciling finite and Infinite Mind. This Hegel finds, not in the person and work of Jesus Christ, but in the idea conveyed by the image of Jesus Christ and in the conclusions to be drawn from this idea content. Thus, in the development of Hegel's religious philosophy, the Christian religion becomes "religion of general revelation, religion without a Mediator."[4]

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[4] Ibid., p. 38.

1. The Other of God

The universality of "The Kingdom of the Father" passes over into its antithesis, its determination, in the specific form of finitude. "The Kingdom of the Son" is the eternal Idea of God in the element of conscious difference from the Absolute Idea in-itself. The eternal Idea in-itself is logically the prius of all else. From Idea as absolute universality, idea as particular self-consciousness develops as the determination of Idea in its other.

a. Essential Differentiation

Hegel's insistence upon the necessity of negation for the categories of pure idea, for consciousness, for the concrete nature of the Absolute, expresses his presumption of the all-pervasive reality of the dialectical process of opposition or contrast with an other. Hegel formulates his logic, his ontology, his metaphysics under the direction of this conviction that the dialectic is the essential character of thought and being. The Hegelian dialectic is primarily a dialectic of Idea. But since the rational is the Real, the movement of Idea by self-determination articulates Reality. Occasionally, Hegel translates the dialectic of Idea into a specific dialectic of Being, as for example, in the following passage from his Philosophy of Religion:

> Eternal in-and-for-itself-Being is this: to disclose itself, to determine, to differentiate, to posit itself as its distinction, thus to perpetually transmute the distinction--Being-in-and-for-itself is continuous (process), therein it returns into itself and only thus is it Spirit.[5]

The act of differentiation, or judgment (Urtheil), is determination by negation. Therefore, when Hegel speaks of the activity of the Absolute determining itself, the process is the self-determination of the essential nature of God in its other. The Absolute posits itself, determines its meaning, is actual for itself, in this dialectical process of a judgment (Urtheil)--a division of the primal unity into the particular form of its manifestation.

The diremption of negativity constitutes the notion for Hegel.[6] This negative moment in the dialectic of Idea and Being is, for Hegel, "the simple point of negative self-relation, the innermost source of all activity, of living and spiritual self-movement, the dialectic soul which all truth has in it . . . ."[7]

Differentiation is essential since Idea is meaningful only in dialectical relation with its other. What is in-itself, is abstract; the concrete, by contrast, is in-and-for-itself. Differentiation produces the other of the thesis, therefore,

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[5] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 248.

[6] The Phenomenology, p. 796.

[7] Science of Logic, II, 477.

the division is not that of absolute negation but of correlation. The first two moments of the dialectical process are "intrinsically conditioned by one another, and are only in relation to each other."[8]

The development of God in himself follows the pattern of self-determining idea in the differentiation of his Being in an other. Spirit which is concrete and absolute, the true nature of God, "exists only as activity, that is, in so far as it posits itself, is for itself, and produces itself."[9] If the Absolute has no differentiation, no objectivity, then, Hegel declares, it has no content, for what is only in-itself is nothing.[10] The activity of differentiation in the other is an essential activity--the necessary self-movement which is the actuality of Absolute Spirit.

b. God and the Other

Hegel asserts that God is a unity, that he is the ultimate and sole reality. What is other than God is, in its separateness, unreal and untrue;[11] but the other as the

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[8] The Logic, p. 222.

[9] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, p. 90.

[10] Ibid., XVI, 196.

[11] When Hegel turns from a consideration of the nature of separateness of the finite from the Infinite in man, otherness in this sense is the character of sin as Hegel describes it.

determination of God is the very being of God:

> God alone is; God, however, only is through mediation of himself by himself; He wills the finite; He posits himself as an other and becomes thereby an other for himself, a finite; for he has an other opposed to himself. This differentiation (otherness), however, is the opposition of himself by himself. He is thus the finite opposed to the Ultimate; the truth, however, is that this finiteness is only an appearance in which he has (or determines) himself.[12]

In this being for-self in the other, God determines himself in the sense of having content and reality for himself. The being of God unfolds itself, differentiates, determines itself as concrete self-consciousness, as Being-in-and-for-itself.

The Absolute Spirit is spirit conscious of itself as Spirit. "For spirit," Hegel writes, "is knowledge of self in a state of alienation of self: spirit is the Being which is the process of retaining identity with itself in its otherness."[13] This is the form of revelation in which God manifests himself in his other. The Absolute is known, not as in-itself, as Absolute Substance, but as a Being which is essentially self-conscious in its manifestation, in its being as Spirit.

The movement to determination within self is a vital principle. The essence of the reality of Spirit is the process of realizing itself in this activity. The being of Spirit _is_ this movement. Hegel writes--"This movement within itself

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[12] _Werke_, bd. XV, _Philosophie der Religion_, p. 209.

[13] _The Phenomenology_, p. 758.

expresses the absolute Being *qua* Spirit."[14] The conclusion drawn from this principle of determination for theology is God essentially involves differentiation in an other. As Absolute Consciousness, God exhibits the process of distinguishing himself from himself as the object of consciousness. This relation of the Absolute to the other is the ideological significance of Hegel's statement of the Christian doctrine of the Son as the only begotten of the Father. God himself is the self-consciousness which exists in-and-for-itself. The self-conscious Spirit which exists for itself, God as Spirit--

> produces himself, presents himself thus as Being-in-distinction; he is by his own self (his own self-determination) the Son; in the form of Son, the other part of the process is present--that God loves the Son, posits himself as identical with him, and yet distinct.[15]

The specific identification of the otherness of God with the doctrine of the incarnation is, however, invalid for Hegel's thought as a whole. "The Kingdom of the Son" is the eternal idea of God in the aspect of difference or otherness. By this process, pure idea is transmuted in the manifestation of that which is other than Idea. "The Kingdom of the Son," as the negative moment of the Absolute Being in-self, includes the objectification of the Idea in the world and in finite spirit. This is the essential transmutation of the Absolute

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 767.

[15] *Werke*, bd. XV, *Philosophie der Religion*, p. 468.

into the specific form of finitude--its determination in its own other.

Accordingly, the being of the world is the objectification of Absolute Idea into the external, the particular; but the world is, in its separateness, mere appearance, unreal in itself. It is only a moment, a moment passing from the state of separation to that of reunion with Absolute Idea. The being of the world as the other, "the truth of the world," is only its ideality. Hegel maintains that its nature determines that it should be, that is, the world is the necessary moment of negativity, but it has reality only in an ideal sense.[16] The actualization of external reality is the return to Idea--the reconciliation of Idea through the mediation of finite mind.

The differentiation of God culminates in finite spirit in that, with this moment of subjective consciousness, universality is determined in its specific other. Particularity is represented by Hegel as the--

> positing of determinations, as a momentarily heldfast distinction; this is the objective (outgoing) appearance of God in finiteness, for this is the essential finiteness--the separation of that which in itself is identical, but which is determined in its separation.[17]

The being of finitude is simply the other of the Infinite. It is only as this negation that it has being. In itself it

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[16] Ibid., XVI, 250.

[17] Ibid., p. 251.

possesses the independence of the essential other, but in its proper significance, finitude is the self-consciousness of Absolute Spirit.

The content which Hegel gives to the idea of finite spirit distinguishes his statement of the doctrine of the incarnation. This is the essential significance of the separation of the Son. The finite is the general sphere of "the determined, the differentiated, limited, negative."[18] As such, it is the presentation of the eternal Idea of God in consciousness or differentiation.

Finite subjectivity, as the "separation of what is implicitly identical, but which maintains itself in the act of separation," designates, for Hegelian thought, the Christian doctrine of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. The same content is associated with the idea of finitude and the idea of the Son. The world of finite spirit represents, for Hegel, "an act of going out on the part of God into finitude, an act of manifestation in finitude." This idea, Hegel states, is suggested by the Son as separated from the Father, that is, the idea of the essential differentiation within the nature of the Absolute.[19]

But the eternal Son of God and finitude, while implicitly the same idea, are distinguishable, Hegel insists. God exists objectively for the Son in a concrete sense in that the Son

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[18] _Ibid_.

[19] _Ibid_.

represents the incarnation of Spirit. This is the complete transmutation of the negation of finitude; it signifies the positive moment resulting from the realization of union in otherness. The idea of the eternal Son of God expresses the perfecting of the finite in the union of the Infinite and the finite. The eternal Son of the Father, Spirit in-and-for-itself, is not the same as the world of the finite, but nothing more is meant by the idea of the Son *as the other of God* than is represented by the significance of the finite. Both signify the moment of separation, the *other of God*.[20] But in the idea of the incarnation, the reconciliation of Spirit as Infinite and finite Spirit is realized in its concrete significance.

2. The Idea of the Incarnation

The analysis of *The Phenomenology of Mind* follows the self-determined development of actual mind as a unified whole of finite limited mind and Infinite universal Mind. Each stage is but a moment of the whole in which Mind is conscious of itself as Mind. Commenting on this self-manifestation of the Absolute Mind in man, James Baillie states that it is--

> at once the consummation of his experience and the discovery that the Divine Spirit has been the immanent agency operative throughout experience, giving reality to each stage and continuity to the whole process. For it is of the essence of

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 252.

> Hegel's argument that the Absolute Spirit takes upon itself and makes its own the stupendous labour of the world's history; that in so doing it infuses the component parts with spiritual significance, embodies itself in human form, and, in the process, at once eternal and in time, reconciles the world to itself and itself to the world.[21]

This "stupendous labour of the world's history" is for Hegel, however, more than the activity of Absolute Spirit--it _is_ Absolute Spirit. For the Absolute, by Hegel's definition, is Spirit revealing itself as an other and reconciling itself to itself in the consummate expression of Spirit--Spirit conscious of itself.

Hegel interprets the Christian doctrine of the incarnation as picturing the fundamental significance of the idea of Spirit. "Since . . . we call the Absolute Notion the Divine nature," Hegel asserts, "the Idea of Spirit is to be (considered) the unity of divine and human natures."[22] However, as Hegel evaluates the idea of the incarnation in the Christian religion, it is idea in a specifically limited form.

a. Idea as _Vorstellung_

The form in which the idea of the incarnation is set forth in Christian thought is _Vorstellung_.[23] This form is

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[21] _The Phenomenology_, p. 54.

[22] _Werke_, bd. XVI, _Philosophie der Religion_, p. 210.

[23] "_Vorstellung_" was discussed as one of the forms of the religious consciousness in Chapter II, pp. 63-64. The

not rational self-determined concept but idea presented in terms of references to what is external, general, or historical. It is to be distinguished from both the abstract categories of the understanding and rational speculative thought, for it is, Hegel suggests, something of a middle term between abstract thought and rational self-conscious thought.

In the form Vorstellung, the presentation of Idea is essentially entangled with the sensuous.[24] The content may be rational in its ultimate significance, but the manner of presentation is imaginative, or pictorial, or general. The pictorial form of presentation of idea is not, Hegel insists, to be confused with a mere picture in the sense of Bild. Its significance is not the picture as such but the content of the picture. Bild has the form of matter, and this is also its content; Vorstellung represents its content in an objective manner, but its content, in contrast to the form of its representation, belongs to the rational. Picture is particular in significance; the pictorial form of the imaginative concept is universal in significance.

Because Vorstellung lacks the form of thought itself and uses, therefore, the form of generalized ideas or pictorial representation, it does not represent the notion (Begriff) as

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point of this section is the significance of the application of Vorstellung to the idea of the incarnation.

[24] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, p. 156.

notion but as "the preliminary and similarly immediate form of this universality . . . ."[25] It is not the immediate as such which is signalized by this form but the immediate as representing the universal. This relation is illustrated by Hegel in terms of a comparison with the analysis of the immediacy of sense and perception. In the process of knowing the object of sense, the "this" of sense is first translated to the "thing" of apperception which has reference to, but has not attained, the ideological representation in terms of the categories applied by the understanding to the object.

The reference of Vorstellung to that which is outside the content of the idea itself creates within this form itself a constant state of unrest between the immediate perception of the form in which the idea is expressed and its real content. But the sensuous and universal aspects of the form are related to its content only as suggestive, not as interpretive.[26] The content opposes both the pictorial or generalized presentation and its external reference, because the content is not this externality. The truth of Vorstellung is not meant to be grasped, Hegel states, in terms of the sensuous manner of its presentation. The sensuous or generalized image is essential to the form itself, but not to its content, for the content itself does away with the unity of picture and meaning and

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[25] The Phenomenology, p. 762.

[26] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, p. 156.

brings the meaning itself into the foreground.[27]

In religious dogma, this form Vorstellung finds two characteristic expressions. The first is what Hegel calls the self-related, independent Vorstellung.[28] The examples which he cites of this usage are the doctrines that God is all-wise, good, righteous. As self-related, independent general ideas, they are unhistorical in form and have reference to generalized concepts which contravene sensuous, finite qualities. These attributes assigned to the Absolute do not state the dialectical relations of the self-determining idea but simple abstract self-relations. They are grasped and expressed in religious thought by means of a contrast with contingency or externality. The second expression of Vorstellung, the characteristic imaginative presentation of Spirit in the Christian religion, is set forth in terms of the historical. This form represents external history as the activity of God in history; it finds the revelation of God in simple particularities of event or person. Accordingly, it uses historical records of persons, events, and words spoken.

The content of this latter form may, Hegel asserts, express Absolute Idea, but as Vorstellung, it does so in an imperfect form. Consequently, while the characteristic form of the religious consciousness indicates the revelation of the Absolute Spirit, this form--

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[27] Ibid., pp. 154-155. [28] Ibid., pp. 159 ff.

> is not yet the self-consciousness of spirit which has reached its notion as notion; the mediating process is still incomplete. In this connexion of being and thought, then, there is a defect; spiritual life is still cumbered with an unreconciled diremption into a "here" and a "beyond." The content is the true content; but all its moments, when placed in the element of mere imaginative presentation, have the character, not of being conceptually comprehended, but of appearing as completely independent aspects, externally related to one another.[29]

The form is defective because it is imperfect or abstract. External particularity is taken to be the revelation of the Absolute. In this form, the expression of the content does not rise above the level of consciousness. It is immediate and personal in its import; it lacks the determined progression of the necessary determination of idea. It suggests the content of Idea--the self-determined manifestation of the Absolute in its other--without having the form of self-determined Idea. The historical, as so viewed, involves contingency. What happened is simply presented; there is no determined necessity in the content itself which leads to this development.

According to Hegel's evaluation of the traditional presentation of the Christian religion, the source of its idea is essentially and inherently external. The authority cited for faith is revelation regarded as something given to man by a Being radically separated from man. The process indicated by this form is that of a content proffered to man. It can only be received as an expression of what is manifestly foreign to

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[29] The Phenomenology, pp. 763-764.

his nature. Therefore, Hegel concludes, this form attains only the primitive level of mind conscious of an object. Consequently, this manner of presentation fails in the articulation of the truth of Absolute self-consciousness. This is its content, but it is expressed in a manner which is contrary to its content. If this form is taken as essential to the content, Hegel concludes that the truth of the content itself is destroyed. This manner of conceiving the Absolute--

> degrades the content into a historical imaginative idea and an heirloom handed down by tradition. In this way there is retained and preserved only what is purely external in belief, and the retension of it as something dead and devoid of knowledge; while the inner element in belief has passed away, because this would be the notion knowing itself as notion.[30]

Hegel labored to overcome the identification of the content of the Christian religion with its form of statement by a method involving the transposing of the historical form into the rational notion. In the process, the Christian understanding of the relation of man to God undergoes a radical transformation. Reconciliation is no longer accomplished for man by a God who judges, forgives, redeems. This is true precisely because, in the Hegelian interpretation, the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is regarded as consciousness of the Absolute Mind in rational thought, as Mind manifesting itself in the consciousness of finite mind, as Absolute Mind become conscious of itself in mind.

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[30] Ibid., p. 768.

For the true content of the incarnation to be articulated in a perfect form, the historical, pictorial form must be superseded. The idea represented in this form of the assignment of the incarnation to a particular historical individual as such must not be "intuitively apprehended but conceptually comprehended,"[31] that is, it must be grasped not simply as an external and contingent fact given to man in a historical event. Rather, the idea should be comprehended as the spiritual and, therefore, rational expression of the truth that finite existence is the necessary moment of the determination of the Absolute Idea. The significance of the incarnation lies not in external, historical fact, but in content underlying this form of expression--the manifestation of the Absolute in its mediate form, in which is accomplished the reconciliation of God and man. The actual self-consciousness of mind is the form of this comprehension.

Hegel accepts the content of the idea of the incarnation. It is only when the form is presented as an essential part of the content that he finds this expression of idea objectionable. Given this judgment, it was natural that, in his analysis of Christian religion, Hegel should attempt to disassociate the form and content. The form of the historical Jesus is, Hegel admits, the heart of the Christian religious consciousness, but it is not the truth of the Christian religion. It

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31. Ibid., p. 764.

is not the historical figure, nor the account handed down in written records, nor the witness of the church to this Jesus, which provided Hegel with a justification for the judgment that the Christian religion is the absolute and perfect religion. It is the absolute religion by virtue of its disclosure, which is still in a limited form (Vorstellung), of consciousness, of the absolute Notion--the self-determined manifestation of the Spirit in its other, the unity of the Divine and human nature.

b. The Significance of the Historical Christ

The stories of particular individuals used by various religions are generally not to be taken seriously as history. Some are obviously myths, as for example, the pseudo-historical characters of classical Greek religion. This, however, is precisely the defect which Hegel finds in the Greek religion. The idea of God, as presented in this religion, is imperfect, not, however, because the Gods are pictured in terms of human characteristics, but because the idea of God so represented is not human enough.[32] The idea lacks particularity.

By contrast, the fundamental historical reference of the Christian religion--the fact of Jesus Christ--is to be taken seriously. Jesus Christ, this particular individual, Hegel

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[32] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 124.

asserts, is the Son of God. In him the Truth is revealed. There is something here, Hegel continues, which is more than a representation, something historical which is such that "it is to be regarded in a definite sense as a history, the story of Jesus Christ. This means more than a myth after the fashion of a picture story; (it means) something completely historical."[33]

God must, according to the necessity inherent in the dialectic of Idea, determine himself in his other; or, in terms of historical pictures, God must manifest himself in a particular individual. This Jesus Christ accomplishes in revealing God as concrete Spirit. According to Hegel's presentation of the idea of the incarnation in the historical Jesus, "this concrete God is beheld sensuously and immediately as a self, as a real individual human being; only so is it a self-consciousness."[34] Thus the perfecting of God himself demands the actual and the particular--God must be incarnate.

From the perspective of man's existence as finite consciousness, Hegel asserts that it is only when the Absolute "appears and reveals himself as this (particular) individual, spirit, that the subjective knowledge of spirit as Spirit can be the true manifestation of God. . . ."[35] In this moment the

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[33] Ibid., XV, 157.

[34] The Phenomenology, p. 758.

[35] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 125.

Absolute is manifest, and the particular realizes itself as united with the Universal. The finite and the particular attains its true expression only by the process of the Infinite and finite being reconciled in the particular. Only an actual incarnation enunciates the truth of the reality of the whole. Thus Hegel argues for the historicity of the incarnation:

> That Absolute Spirit has taken on the shape of self-consciousness inherently, and therefore also consciously to itself--this appears now as the belief of the world, the belief that spirit exists _in fact_ as a definite self-consciousness, i.e. as an actual human being; that spirit is an object for immediate experience; that the believing mind _sees_, _feels_, and _hears_ this divinity.[36]

The words used by Hegel specifically delineate the realm of actual objective history, involving a historical person--Jesus Christ. It is also the insistence of Hegel that incarnation of the Divine Being in the particular self-consciousness is the content of the Christian religion. But only when he begins to examine the content which he finds represented in Jesus Christ does it become clear why he should insist on the historicity of Jesus Christ.

This history regarded in a strict factual sense is only a single, inadequate perspective. It has, he remarks, "the Divine for its content, divine act, divine timeless happening, absolute divine action. This is the inwardness, the truth, the substantiality of this history, and it is just this which

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[36] _The Phenomenology_, p. 757.

is the object of reason."[37] Christ viewed apart from this spiritual content is without real meaning according to Hegel. Accordingly, in *The Philosophy of History*, Hegel contends that only after he came to them as Spirit did Christ signify the truth of his being to those who knew him as a living person in the flesh. We do not adopt the right point of view, Hegel insists, when we think of Christ only as "a historical bygone personality." For as so regarded--that is, unspiritually regarded--he is but a man of exceptional talents, character and morality. All of which does not, for Hegel, allow the possibility of men gaining the speculative idea of spirit:

> If Christ is to be looked upon only as an excellent, even impeccable individual, and nothing more, the conception of the Speculative Idea, of *Absolute Truth* is ignored. *But this is the desideratum*, the *point from which we start*. Make of Christ what you will, exegetically, critically, historically--demonstrate as you please, how the doctrines of the Church were established by Councils, attained currency as the result of this or that episcopal interest or passion, or originated in this or that quarter;--let all such circumstances have been what they might--the only concerning question is: *What is the Idea of the Truth in and for itself*?[38]

The actual concern of Hegel is not the historical but the ideological. The attempt to recover the primitive form of the

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[37] *Werke*, bd. XV, *Philosophie der Religion*, p. 157. All history in actual fact has this double sense for Hegel. It is both outward history and ideal content. When he considers World history, it is not factual history as such that is his ultimate concern but history as the scene of the realization of the Idea.

[38] *Philosophy of History*, pp. 325-326 (italics mine).

religious consciousness of the New Testament Church, or the factual details of the life of Jesus, or a record of the words spoken by the incarnate Christ, is to confuse "the origin, in the sense of the immediate existence of the first historical appearance, with the simplicity of the notion."[39] This manifests an impoverishment of the content of the Christian idea of the incarnation in which the idea of the Absolute Spirit revealed in the historical event is lost. What is sought in such an attempt is not the self-determining notion, but "bare externality and particularity, merely the historical manner in which spirit once upon a time appeared, the soulless recollection of a presumably (gemeinten) individual historical figure and its past."[40] The attestation of the Christ as the incarnation of God is "the witness of one's own spirit," for in this experience of realization, Spirit comes to know self as Spirit. This is the real significance of the historical Jesus.

The external history of Jesus is the vehicle for the truth of the concrete nature of God. This history is, for Hegel, the explication of the nature of God. Therefore, the articulation of this meaning is the true history of Christ.[41] The significance of the historical Christ lies in the fact that in the idea of Christ, God is beheld "sensuously and immediately

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[39] The Phenomenology, p. 764.

[40] Ibid., p. 765.

[41] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, pp. 236-237.

as a self, as a real individual human being."[42] In this expression of the nature of God, the Christian religion sets forth the completed content of Absolute Idea in the form of religious consciousness. Jesus Christ as God incarnate conveys in pictorial form Absolute Mind in-and-for-itself.

The figure of the historical Christ represents a revelation of God for Hegel. What the Divine Being is, is made manifest, is actualized in Christ. In the idea of the incarnation, that which is distinguished is still truly one--as the thought of distinction, he writes in The Phenomenology, is only one thought--while manifest in its otherness. The Divine is revealed in this very fact as result, as process, as Spirit, as Being which is conscious of itself in its other. The incarnation of God is the manifestation of Absolute Being in its own other, its very self. This idea of the incarnation expresses the real nature of the Absolute Spirit, for herein God is revealed as joined in particular being as the unity of separation and union. The essential characteristic of the Absolute, according to the Hegelian scheme, is that it is a unity of the Absolute with particularity, or, in terms of The Phenomenology, it is Spirit conscious of itself as Spirit. This unity as an object for itself is expressed, Hegel declares, "in the Christian imaginative idea of the incarnation of God."[43] This

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[42] The Phenomenology, p. 758.

[43] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, p. 86.

conception depicts the "self-existing unity, the determined human form, the incarnation (Menschwerdung) of God. . . ."[44]

c. Sacrifice of the Particular

The doctrine of the incarnation portrays the inseparable unity of Absolute Being and self-conscious finite being. In doctrinal statement this appears "in the form that the Divine Being empties Itself of Itself and is made flesh." As stated, this indicates that the Absolute is incarnate in a particular individual; but the form of the particular as such is not seen as the determination of the Universal. The content represented by the story of Jesus completes the incarnation, for it represents "the process whereby God, who has assumed shape and form, surrenders again His immediate existence, and returns to His essential Being."[45]

Only as the particular surrenders its separateness is it possible for the universal to realize itself in the particular. This is true in the Hegelian interpretation of logic, in the Hegelian analysis of the development of Mind, and in the Hegelian understanding of absolute religion. When the Absolute Spirit comes to exist for itself, that is, as the negation of the differentiation, the Absolute in-and-for-itself exists.

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[44] Ibid., p. 87.

[45] The Phenomenology, p. 776.

As applied by Hegel to his interpretation of Christ, this principle means that it is not as a particular, historically-past person that Christ expresses the idea of the Absolute, but as the universal Christ whose sacrifice represents the negation of particular separateness. The consciousness which looks upon the Christ in terms of a man seen and heard attains merely the level of the immediately present awareness, and, consequently, the reality of Christ passes over into his having been. It is as living Spirit that the idea of Christ reveals the Absolute. The former consciousness had Christ as an object existing, of which man is aware; but in the spiritual consciousness, Christ becomes Spirit for Spirit.[46] Thus the idea of Christ transcends the pictorial presentation of an historical person and becomes the Spirit within men.

The death of Christ portrays the process of the conversion of the form of consciousness. Bur first of all, his death, Hegel asserts, is the final proof of the humanity of the figure represented in the idea of Christ; it means "that Christ had been God-man, the God who had at the same time human nature even unto death. It is the lot of human finitude to die; death is the most complete proof of humanity, of absolute finitude . . . ."[47] Secondly, his death portrays the moment of the surrender of finitude. At the same time, this

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[46] The Phenomenology, pp. 762-763.

[47] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 298.

moment is the evidence in the form of historical pictures of the actuality of the incarnation and of the negation of particular existence. In the sacrifice of the particular, in the moment in which "sensuousness, immediate individuality was nailed to a cross,"[48] the Absolute Spirit is revealed in its true nature. The sensuous existence in which spirit is represented in the idea of the incarnate God is only "a transitional stage" for Hegel, for only as Christ dies, he asserts, is he Spirit.

The final negative moment--the negation of the negative--is in fact the positive moment in the Hegelian dialectic. Accordingly, the process of the dialectic is the Absolute in-itself objectified in its other of finiteness or particularity, and finally actualized in its completed content through the negation of the otherness. The death of Christ, as the death of the abstract particularity of God incarnate, sets forth the process which terminates in the realization of Absolute Spirit. In this manner, Hegel translates the historical form of the idea of the incarnation and the death of Christ into what he considers to be its true rational significance. Death here means more than the non-existence of this particular individual; it suggests the process of the realization of the universal.

This is the pictorial presentation in historical terms of what is, for Hegel, the necessary pattern of all life. The

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[48] Ibid., p. 124.

particular self-consciousness, he states, does not have to really die as Christ did in the accounts of the Christian religion; but, just as truly, particularity must expire to realize the Universal. This is Absolute Idea reconciling itself to itself in the particular; it is the Absolute Mind realizing itself in the finite mind. The death of the mediator grasped by the particular self-consciousness, for Hegel, "means the sublation of his factuality, of his particular independent existence: this particular self-existence has become universal self-consciousness."[49]

The death represented by the death of Christ is not merely that of the natural body, not the particular objectivity, but "the abstraction of the Divine Being."[50] This is the death of the abstraction of particularity, the abstraction of otherness, the abstraction of finite existence; through this crucifixion of abstract particularity is realized the concrete Absolute. By the sacrifice of the particular, the Being of the Absolute in the particular, the Infinite in the finite, is actualized.

d. The Content of the Idea

Christianity is the completed expression of religion for Hegel, because, in Christian doctrine, he finds depicted the

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[49] The Phenomenology, p. 781.

[50] Ibid.

religion of the manifestation of God. Herein God knows himself in finite spirit. The absolute religion is the religion in which God reveals himself as self-consciousness; and it is this absolute identity of the Infinite and finite Spirit which is distinctively the content of the Christian idea of the incarnation. This content sets Christianity apart as the absolute religion:

> The Christian religion is the perfect religion, the religion in which the being of Spirit is for itself, the religion in which Spirit itself has become objective for itself. In it the Universal and the individual spirit, the Infinite and the finite are inseparable; their absolute identity is this religion and the same as its content.[51]

Religion has "itself become objective for itself" is Hegel's way of suggesting the self-consciousness or fulfillment expressed in the Christian religion. The consciousness of God, which is the essential denotation of religion as such, is articulated by the idea of the incarnation. With the development of an idea of an actual incarnation, the Absolute is considered to be conscious of self in its other.

The notion of the incarnation expresses the absolute unity in separation of the finite and the Infinite. Jesus Christ is the union; he is, in the words of Hegel, that which reveals and is revealed. "Spirit is known as self-consciousness, and to this self-consciousness it is directly revealed, for it is

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[51] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, pp. 193-194.

this self-consciousness itself."[52] Jesus Christ represents this union in separation and union; he is God-Man.

The figurative form of the Christian religion suggests the true relation of Absolute Spirit and man. The idea that the divine being takes on human nature asserts, according to Hegel, that "implicitly and inherently the two are not separated" and this is "the true picture of the relation."[53] The idea that divine nature is united with the human, that Spirit is one as infinite and as finite, is presented in the form of objective and historical fact in the doctrine of the incarnation. The other is the essential other. The Absolute, Hegel declares, does not have actuality apart from this determination in its other. Spirit is revealed, made known as Spirit, in the figure of Jesus Christ conscious of himself as Absolute; and this revelation is completed in the presentation of the sacrifice of the particular.

The essential content of the Christian religion is the idea of the incarnation; and this idea, according to Hegel, signifies the true genius of Christianity.[54] As Hegel interprets this doctrine, it is in fundamental agreement with the content of his system of dialectical, idealistic monism. The Christian religion proclaims Christ as God-Man; consequently,

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[52] The Phenomenology, pp. 759-760.

[53] Ibid., p. 774.

[54] Werke, bd. II, Phänomenologie des Geistes, p. 577.

Hegel asserts, "the unity of divine and human nature" is brought to the consciousness of man as a certainty. Christian religion conveys the conviction that the Divine and human natures are not innately distinct but are rather one, that--"God is in human form." "The truth," Hegel states, "is that there is only one Reason, one Spirit, that spirit as finite has no true existence."[55] Separateness, finite particularity is in-itself abstract and meaningless. Spirit is set forth in the Christian religion in the idea that the particular is the manifestation of the universal, that the Absolute is determined in its otherness, that Geist is one as human and divine Spirit.

3. The Result of the Incarnation

In the traditional language of theology, a study of what Jesus Christ accomplished through his life, death and resurrection would probably be designated as a study of the work of Christ. But such a designation is unsuited for Hegel's analysis of this same subject. It would, in fact, distort the meaning he gives to the idea of the incarnation. It is not the work of Christ which occupies Hegel's attention; rather, it is the result--the conclusions to be drawn from the idea of incarnation.

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[55] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 286.

a. Consciousness of Unity

The result of the idea of incarnation is, for Hegel, essentially a new consciousness--a consciousness of the reconciliation of God and man.

Mind at the level of self-consciousness in The Phenomenology of Mind reaches finally a moment of isolated abstraction in-self which Hegel terms "The Unhappy Consciousness." The next stage of development is the recognition of the inherent contradiction in self-isolation. This leads to the renunciation of the self and the acceptance of reality as an Absolute which is in contrast to the particular self. The self then is regarded as mere nothingness.[56] With the negation of the particular self-consciousness, the possibility of a positive referral of consciousness to the self-consciousness of the ultimate presents itself. This mediate relation is for Hegel "a connected inferential process." The completed consciousness, the self-consciousness of Spirit is neither the Absolute in-itself, nor the particular; rather, it is the mediated relation between the particular and the Ultimate, in which the Universal and the self-conscious individual are held in a unity of separation and union. The individual, as the universal in the particular, is the principle of mediation:

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[56] The Phenomenology, p. 263.

> Through this middle term the one extreme, unchangeable consciousness, has a being for the unessential consciousness, in which, at the same time is also involved that the latter likewise has a being for the former, solely through that middle term; and this middle term is thus one which presents both extremes to one another, and acts as the minister of each in turn in dealing with the other.[57]

This unity, implicitly present at the level of the mediation of the consciousness, is fully articulated in absolute Knowledge which is the separation and union of Mind.

A theological analysis of the incarnation presents a doctrine of the manifestation of the eternal Son of God in a particular person. As translated into Hegelian terminology, the doctrine expresses Mind in-and-for-itself. Both the doctrinal and speculative forms of expression state an essential unity. But the two statements of the incarnation differ radically in their subject matter. The statement of the incarnation in traditional Christian theology has as its subject God incarnate in Jesus Christ. The essential unity is, according to Hegel, specifically realized in Jesus Christ, but the subject is not Jesus Christ. The real subject of Hegel's statement is the essential unity of Infinite and finite Mind. In the idea of Christ, an idea which Hegel asserts contradicts the either-or thinking of understanding, Hegel finds that--

> the unity of divine and human nature has been brought to consciousness, to certainty for man, since the otherness, or as

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57. _Ibid._, p. 264.

it is also expressed, the finitude, weakness, frailty of human nature can not be irreconcilable with this unity, if, in the eternal Idea, otherness does no damage to the unity which God is.[58]

The unity enunciated in the doctrine is the unity of divine and human nature. Consequently, the figure of Christ has the significance, not of a single historical person, but of the truth of human existence as the other of God. To be comprehended in its truth, finite existence demands expression in terms of a consciousness of mind. To convey the concrete reality of Idea, the Absolute must appear "as individual, exclusive man,"[59] for it is essential to the nature of the Absolute that it be articulated in the form of a conscious self. The true Absolute is pictured in the Christian religion in the form of an imaginative, pictorial idea (Vorstellung). But the most significant factor in the incarnation, the most important consequence of Christ for man, is this consciousness of the union of the infinite and the finite, the union of God and man represented by this idea of God incarnate in Jesus Christ.

The Christian religion presents this idea in the story of Jesus Christ. That God has in himself the moment of subjectivity, of otherness, of particularity, is thus dramatically portrayed by a historical reference. Man accepting this picture in faith takes the idea over into his own life in the

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[58] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 286.

[59] Ibid., p. 283.

consciousness of reconciliation. Accordingly, the work of Christ, as Hegel interprets it, is not to teach men of God, nor to present a system of morality, nor even to present the message of reunion, but rather, the work of Christ is the result of the idea of the incarnation--the expression of the religious consciousness of the union of God and man as an actual self-consciousness. The concrete Truth is expressed by this consciousness, and in this form it is conveyed to mankind in general.[60]

b. Atoning Reconciliation

The first result of the idea of the incarnation is the presentation of the consciousness of union. This consciousness is perfected in the actual reconcilement of God and man. The possibility of this reconciliation depends upon the

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[60] Hegel believed that this is the only form in which the general body of mankind, as distinct from the few of philosophical competence and cultural enlightenment, can grasp the truth of Absolute Idea. (Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 282.) In The Philosophy of History, Hegel states the necessity of the idea of incarnation first in terms of his system--the subject as universal Idea must be expressed in objective form, it must include its object. Then, he goes on to state the necessity in terms of the limited manner in which men in general comprehend idea. Given this limitation, it is necessary for "the infinite susceptibility which we designate 'Heart'" that the Absolute should assume the form of an object. Accordingly, the Idea is expressed in terms of a human being in order that mankind in general might attain a consciousness of the unity of the infinite and the finite (pp. 351-352).

recognition of the implicit unity of divine and human nature, for only as the Absolute is known not as abstract Being-in-self but as concrete actual Spirit is it possible for the reconcilement to be perfected in the consciousness of the individual.

In Hegel's dialectical scheme, the negation of negation transmutes distinction and separation in thought and being. The final negation is the positive moment of the reconciliation or synthesis of the two previous moments. The negative mediates between the two. Dealing with pure thought, Hegel states:

> The negative appears as mediator, since it includes both itself and the immediate term of which it is the negation. In so far as these two determinations are taken as externally related in any manner, the negative moment is merely the formal mediating element; but as absolute negativity the negative moment of absolute mediation is the unity which is subjectivity and soul.[61]

This is the true, the only mediator between God and man. Christ, represented as the mediator reconciling God and man, prefigures in a historical picture the mediating principle.

What the Christian religion pictures as the infinite love of God is God incarnate in Jesus Christ reconciling the world to himself in the death of Jesus Christ. "This is infinite love," Hegel writes, "that God has fixed identity with what

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[61] Science of Logic, II, 478.

was foreign to him in order to slay it. This is the meaning of the death of Christ. It means Christ has borne the sins of the world, has reconciled God."[62] Absolute history--the essential nature of the activity that is the Absolute--is represented for Hegel in a religious form of expression in the atoning result of the death of Christ. This exhibits, in terms of a historical event, the dialectical realization of Absolute Idea.

The process which results in the reconcilement of God and man is portrayed in the story of Christ. In this account, the essential nature of Reality in-and-for-itself is represented. The telling of the Christ is not simply the recounting of strange events of the past, events which offer stumbling blocks for speculative thought, but is the presentation in historical form of the actual truth of the Absolute Idea. The death of Christ depicts the absolute negativity which is transmutation of the otherness, the separation of finitude.

Traditional Christian theology designates Christ as the mediator. Hegel uses this designation. But Hegel takes the formula--Christ died for all--and makes it read as well--in Christ all died.[63] He states that "this is not any particularity [individual event], but the divine, eternal history."[64] This is a moment in the history of God--that is, universal and

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[62] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 302.

[63] Ibid., p. 304.

[64] Ibid.

absolute history--which is essential to the process and result that is the Absolute. Death depicts a moment in the realization of Absolute Mind; negation is part of the Absolute as a concrete whole. In this figure of Christ on the cross is represented the finitude of man going to its death; otherness is slain in the death of Christ.[65]

Through this death, the death of the particular, the reconciliation of the universal and the particular is actualized. The negative moment of separation is ended. The sin of the world, the sin of upholding of conscious finitude, is borne and overcome. What Christ sets forth is the essential fact of human life--man "*potentially (an sich) God and dead*."[66] That which is potentially present is explcitly realized by negation of finiteness, and thus Absolute Being returns to itself in the true being of Spirit. In the story of Jesus Christ, as Hegel interprets it, is found "the presentation of the process of this that man, that spirit is."[67] The meaning of spirit is explicated in the result of idea of Christ. The Christian religion proclaims that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself; for Hegel, this means that otherness is realized as a moment in God himself, as the self-differentiation of the Absolute, and that reconciliation is accomplished by the

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[65] *Ibid.*, p. 305.

[66] *Ibid.*, p. 307 (italics mine).

[67] *Ibid.*

transmutation of the difference in a spiritual union.

Hegel refers to both the essential content and the picture form of this atoning reconciliation in The Phenomenology of Mind. The particular self-consciousness, Hegel states, is the Spirit in its otherness, or natural form; as this particular self-consciousness becomes "self-centered" it is evil. But even in the moment of its "sin," the self-consciousness is implicitly the Absolute. In the imagery of religion, "the world is supposed actually to become evil and be evil as an actual fact, and the atoning reconcilement of the Absolute Being is viewed as an actual existent phenomenon."[68] But this separation is comprehended in speculative thought as a moment of the whole:

> By self-consciousness as such, however, this pictured truth, as regards its form, is considered to be merely a moment that is already superseded and transcended; for the self is the negative, and hence knowledge--a knowledge which is a pure act of consciousness within itself.[69]

Actually, for Hegel, the Absolute Spirit is by its very nature reconciled with itself. It signifies a circular process by which consciousness is reconciled with itself in a spiritual unity, in which the parts are but moments of a whole. This is the essential meaning of the reconcilement for Hegel--a unity in otherness, Being-in-and-for-itself. The content of the

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68. The Phenomenology, p. 778.

69. Ibid.

absolute negativity is expressed, according to Hegel, in historical form by the faith of the Christian religion "that the Divine Being is reconciled with its existence through an event,--the event of God's emptying Himself of His Divine Being through His factual Incarnation and His Death."[70] And Absolute Mediation is depicted in terms of "the spiritual resurrection which is the completed union."

In the content suggested by resurrection as the moment of the completed union, Christianity evinces the essential principle of the Absolute as a result. The subjectivity of the particular is overcome and the principle of "selfness" (Selbstigkeit), by which the reconciliation of the universal and the particular is accomplished, is articulated; that is, as self, the individual negates its particularity and actualizes the Absolute of true self.

c. Concrete Actual Self-Consciousness

The Hegelian interpretation of what Christ accomplished is suggested by such verbs as "realize," "recognize," "enunciate," "articulate." In Christ, Hegel declares, man is redeemed, reconciled, "for in him the idea of eternal truth is recognized, the essence of man acknowledged to be Spirit. . . ."[71]

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[70] *Ibid.*, p. 780.

[71] *Philosophy of History*, p. 328.

That which is important for Hegel is the ideological content of the story of Christ as he interprets it, for here Hegel finds the concrete reality of Spirit enunciated in the form of the religious consciousness. Christ portrays the actualization of Spirit in that "only by stripping himself of his finiteness and surrendering himself to pure self-consciousness, does he attain the truth."[72] The significance of this idea of Christ is that it pictures the eternal history of Spirit, "Christ--man as man--in whom the unity of God and man has appeared, has in his death, and his history generally, himself presented the eternal history of spirit."[73] This history is negation of particularity and the actualization of spirit conscious of itself as Spirit; and this history, Hegel insists, is to be repeated by every man, each must become man as man; he must realize in his own consciousness that which is presented in pictorial form by the story of Christ.

According to Hegel's system, finitude sets forth the necessary other of the Infinite, and, accordingly, the finite as a constituent part of the concrete whole is united with the Infinite. But this is only an implicit, abstract unity until it finds explicit actualization in consciousness. This explicit actualization is the moment of reconciliation in the concrete actual self-consciousness of Spirit. Considered in terms of speculative thought, this means that universal pure

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid. (italics mine).

idea, objectified in otherness, is reconciled to itself in Absolute Knowledge, the development in which Mind is conscious of itself as Mind. This same development of concrete actual self-consciousness is depicted in the form of religious consciousness by the idea of Christ, for "Christ has appeared--*a man who is God--a God who is man*; and thereby peace and reconciliation have accrued to the world."[74] Consequently, the history of Christ is simply a picturing of Absolute Being as concrete actual self-consciousness.[75] The content suggested by this idea is the completion of man as man, but it is more; it is the moment in which the Absolute has, in moving from the eternal simplicity in-self, "attained for the first time its highest nature, its supreme reach of being."[76] Absolute Being is thus actualized in-and-for-itself.

When Hegel states that in Christ man is redeemed and reconciled, what he is asserting is that the principle depicted in Christ is the moment of concrete, actual, self-conscious Mind. This unity is the concrete whole of Reality for Hegel. The Truth, he is saying, is represented by the idea of Christ, for in this moment the Absolute is actualized:

> For this unity of being and thought is self-consciousness and actually exists; in other words, the thought constituted unity

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[74] *Ibid.*, p. 324 (italics mine).

[75] *The Phenomenology*, p. 760.

[76] *Ibid.*

> has at the same time this concrete shape and form of what it is. God, then, is here revealed, as He is; He actually exists as He is in Himself; He is real as Spirit.[77]

The actual and the real are articulated in this idea of the mediated union in self-consciousness of Absolute Spirit conscious of itself.

4. Religion and the Idea of the Incarnation

Christian religion pictures the actualization of the Absolute in the death of the finite Christ and the resurrection of the spiritual Christ. The resurrection is the climactic moment of recognition, of realization, of actualization. The finite consciousness becomes the universal consciousness in "the spiritual resurrection." This "spiritual resurrection," according to Hegel, is to be distinguished from the reference to a historical event in the Christian tradition. Christian belief, however, does depict in this reference the true process "by which God's individual self-consciousness becomes the universal, becomes the religious communion."[78]

a. Universal Self-Consciousness

"The dead Divine Man, or Human God," for Hegel, "is implicitly universal self-consciousness."[79] This implicit

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[77] Ibid., p. 761.

[78] Ibid., p. 780.

[79] Ibid., p. 778.

consciousness becomes explicit in the moment of the universal self-consciousness, that is, the universal self-consciousness of Spirit in its own community.[80]

The Phenomenology of Mind analyzes the progress of mind to the stage of Absolute knowledge. But the process is essentially the explication of what is implicitly in the mind from the beginning. The explicit moment is the moment in which Mind is in its own community of Spirit conscious of itself as Spirit. The Mind's phenomenon presents a connected unity of the stages of consciousness: consciousness, self-consciousness, concrete mind. When stated in ontological categories, the three moments are: "Essential Being; explicit Self-existence, which is the express otherness of essential Being, and for which that Being is object; and Self-existence or Self-knowledge *in* that other."[81] The moment of separation, although signifying the independent existence of otherness, is a part of the whole. The distinctions resolved themselves in self-determined development of the whole. They are, Hegel remarks, "just as immediately resolved as they are made, and are just as directly made as they are resolved, and the truth and the reality consists precisely in this self-closed circular process."[82] This movement within self is the universal self-consciousness of the Absolute. Absolute Mind is a result, a relation in-and-for-itself.

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[80] *Ibid.*

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 767.

[82] *Ibid.*

Accordingly, Absolute Knowledge is not an act of recognition in the sense of a presentation of an object separated from the process of knowing it; Absolute Knowledge is rather the identity of the knower and the known. The articulation of idea in-itself through the idea-in-otherness in Absolute Idea is a unity wherein Idea posits itself as its object. In the absolute moment, subject and object are united as a unified whole. This union is not, however, the union of the discrete simplicity of a one, but a union in a relation of community.

b. Religion

The communion of Spirit with itself is, in religious terms, the state of reconcilement. But the Hegelian presentation of reconcilement, even as Absolute Idea, involves a unity of separation and union. The absolute moment, the moment of reconcilement is the union of the One and its other, of the Universal and the particular. The transition is the negation of separation of the particularity, from "I" this particular to the "I" as infinite. The one side--determined as the other of the infinite--is reconciled, determined in the Absolute.

As a phenomenon, religion belongs in the speculative moment of mind.[83] Religion represents a self-determined relation of the Absolute, for, in religion, Spirit relates itself to its

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[83] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, pp. 214 ff.

own other. In the consciousness of the Absolute, religion signifies the communion of Absolute Spirit. It is the reconciliation, not of that which is absolutely separated, but of the Infinite in its other--the finite. Spiritual religion and knowledge which is absolute have essentially the same significance. Hegel asserts that:

> Religion, therefore, is a relation of spirit to Absolute Spirit. . . . This is not merely an attitude of spirit to Absolute Spirit, but the Absolute Spirit is itself the self-relation of that which we have set on the other side as distinction. More exaltedly, religion is thus the Idea of Spirit, which relates itself to itself, the self-consciousness of Absolute Spirit.[84]

For Hegel, consciousness, by definition, involves relation. The finite consciousness in "higher" religion is the movement of Spirit in its self-determined differentiation. It is Spirit positing itself as finite consciousness, the other of the consciousness in-itself. The reunion of the two moments is the absolute moment of religion, of Spirit conscious of itself. Thus Hegel asserts that "religion is the Divine Spirit's knowledge of itself through the mediation of finite spirit."[85]

Religion represents the significance of Absolute Spirit in its diremption and reconciliation--

> in becoming concrete actual self, reflecting itself into self and being Subject. This, then, is the process which spirit

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[84] Ibid., p. 216 (italics mine).

[85] Ibid.

> realizes in its communion; this is its life. What this self-revealing spirit is in and for itself, is therefore not brought out by the right content of its life being, so to say, untwined and reduced to its original and primitive strands, to the ideas, for instance, presented before the minds of the first imperfect religious communion, or even to what the actual human being [incarnating the Divine Spirit] has spoken.[86]

The content is the community of Spirit in its completed moment, the moment in which individual self-consciousness becomes universal self-consciousness, or in terms of religious forms, the community in which God and man are joined in conscious union.

Accordingly, God in Christ reconciling man to himself is not the origin or source of the reconciliation but the description of this moment itself. The result is that, for Hegel, Jesus Christ does not instigate the communion of the Christian with God but, it would seem, is this communion, and correspondingly, he is not the authority of the Christian religion, he is this religion. The "spiritual resurrection" negates particularity, and in the consciousness of the perfect union with the infinite, the history of Christ is the history of experience of the Christian man. The self-consciousness of Spirit, the perfected absolute consciousness, pictured in the historical figure of Jesus Christ is actualized in the Christian religion. Regardless of the form of expression--Absolute Idea, Absolute Mind, Absolute Religion, Absolute Being--the significance of the Absolute is the same. It is the moment of the

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[86] The Phenomenology, p. 764.

concrete whole differentiating itself in its other and returning to itself in community. The middle term--Idea in its otherness, Objective mind, finite spirit--is a moment in the process of the whole which in its concrete expression is a unity in separation and union--a spiritual communion.

Chapter V

THE IDEA IN COMMUNITY

The reconciliation of finite and Infinite Mind is the determined telos of the phenomenon of Mind. This thesis Hegel explicates in his study of the science of consciousness--The Phenomenology of Mind. The significance of the study, however, is not merely speculative; it unfolds the redemption of mind from its tragic isolation. The redemption of mind from particularity is to be attained, according to Hegel, by the finite mind becoming conscious of its identity with Infinite Mind in Absolute Knowledge. The character of this redeemed consciousness is such that it is the result, not of the intrusion of a new or foreign element, but of the necessary, self-contained, developmental process of Mind. The end is implicit in the beginning; the final moment is the conclusion of the whole. Such a statement of the nature and process of redemption justifies

the assertion of Richard Kroner that The Phenomenology--and, it might be added, the whole of Hegelian thought--"issues in a profound reinterpretation of Christian dogma."[1] Kroner introduces this judgment by the observation that "just as biblical history serves purposes other than historiographical information, so its speculative counterpart [the account of the experience through which consciousness passes--The Phenomenology] has a religious (i.e., spiritual and redemptive) aim."[2] This particular reinterpretation of Christian dogma entails the proclamation of salvation by a metaphysical idea. The radical transmutation of the Christian religion involved in Hegel's presentation of the Incarnation as idea content finds its reasonable conclusion in the statement of a rational doctrine of salvation--a salvation by the self-determined, self-determination of Mind itself.

"Spirit is divine history (göttliche Geschichte), the process of self-differentiation. . . ."[3] Each of the three moments of the process, or divine history, is necessary to the concrete whole of Spirit. Accordingly, Spirit as divine history involves "eternal Being in and by itself, the form of Universality; the form of differentiation, particularization, Being for an other; the form of return out of differentiation

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[1] "Introduction," Early Theological Writings, p. 48.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 219.

in itself, the absolute Unity."[4] In the Philosophy of Religion, Hegel refers to the first of these forms as "The Kingdom of the Father." This is the moment of abstract Universality, which subsists in the form of pure ideality. Considered in ontological terms, this is Being itself; the speculative designation is pure idea. The second moment Hegel refers to as "The Kingdom of the Son" which signifies the development wherein God is differentiated in an other. "The Kingdom of the Father," God in himself, admits of determination, but only according to ideal form. This determination is not objective otherness but distinction within the Being of God, as for example, the determination in the science of pure idea involves a process of the self-determination of idea by distinction. This is represented in theological language as the unity in one substance of God and his other, the Son; the Son is the "only begotten of the Father."[5] In "The Kingdom of the Son," that which is differentiated in actual objective form is nature and finite spirit. Man as man is therefore a moment of the whole of divine history. He appears first as the other of God, the differentiation, the opposite of Infinite. But in the process of divine history as a whole, finite spirit is returned, reconciled, to Absolute Spirit. With this last development, absolute concrete unity is actualized. Hegel refers to the third moment as "The Kingdom of the Spirit" in which is expressed

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., pp. 221-222.

the consciousness "that man in-himself is reconciled with God, and that the reconciliation is for man. The process of reconciliation itself is contained within religious community (_Cultus_)."[6] The _Cultus_ or religious life represents Spirit in its conscious relation of reconciliation or community. Thus the third moment of divine history is the completion of the process in which the actuality of Absolute Spirit, Spirit conscious of itself in its other, is effected.

1. Differentiation

The nature of community signifies a status of being in relation, which presupposes, as its prior condition, separation, distinction, difference. Therefore, the necessary presumption of actual community is the moment of differentiation, and the spiritual community of which Hegel speaks has as its necessary prior condition a state of differentiation. It is the ultimate synthesis, and, as such, necessarily includes the absolute antithesis of the thesis.

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[6] _Ibid._, p. 223. The word "_Cultus_" is used by Hegel to designate several distinct expressions of spiritual community. These include: worship, the communion of the believer with God, the actual community of Absolute Spirit and finite spirit, and the positive historical community, that is, the church.

a. God Only Is

The reality of otherness, of differentiation, of finite existence, placed in proper perspective, is to be viewed first in the context of the unified wholeness of Reality. The Real is one, not in the sense of abstract identity, but in the sense of a unified whole of separation and unity. Mind expresses the unity of universal and particular as Mind conscious of itself as universal. The unified wholeness is concrete, that is, it is a unity which includes distinction, differentiation. Oneness in the sense of abstract self-identity does not admit of determination, and is therefore not real or actual. The concrete alone is actual; particularity subsists as a moment of the whole. God is absolute concrete universality, which means that God is to be comprehended, not as empty oneness, but as absolute fullness. Therefore, when Hegel asserts that "God is only one," what he is actually affirming is that "there is only the one--God,"[7] and that this one includes differentiation.

The dialectic process is essential to thought and being. "Wherever there is movement, wherever there is life, wherever anything is carried into effect in the actual world, there," Hegel asserts, "Dialectic is at work. It is also the soul of all knowledge which is truly scientific."[8] Universality is

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[7] *Ibid.*, bd. XV, p. 105.

[8] *The Logic*, p. 148.

implicitly other than what it is; it is particularity. By this same process, the principle of the being of finite particularity is to be described. Hegel writes that "the limitations of the finite do not merely come from without; . . . its own nature is the cause of its abrogation, and . . . by its own act it passes into its counterpart."[9] The finite is implicitly other than what it is; it is determined in the nature of its being to its other. Finitude is this other and not-other of God. The rational comprehension of the finite is that it is an essential aspect of the Infinite. It can be said, Hegel states, that God determines himself in the finite. The corollary of this is that the finite is determined in God. "*God only is*; God, however, is only through his mediation with self. He wills the finite; he posits it himself as an other and becomes through it *his own other*, a finite, for he has an other over against himself."[10]

God as Spirit is essentially this self-differentiation of himself in an other. Since this belongs to the very nature of God, he himself is this other than himself. The world is not a single act (*ein Mal*) of creation but an expression of eternal creative activity. God *is* the eternal creativity, this eternal

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[9] *Ibid*.

[10] *Werke*, bd. XV, *Philosophie der Religion*, p. 209; cf. p. 407 (italics mine).

self-differentiation, this activity.[11] This is his notion, his determined content, his revealed Being. Since this is the determination of God himself, this other finds its full expression in man wherein God returns to self consciousness. Accordingly, Hegel declares, with this "is posited the determination that humanity is in God himself; thus man knows the human as a moment of the Divine itself. . . ."[12]

b. The Differentiation as Man

The explicit moment of differentiation of Absolute Spirit in its own other is the moment of finite spirit. Hegel describes man as being "a moment of the divine itself" and asserts that man is "a constituent element in the divine being." "Man himself therefore is comprehended in the Idea of God."[13] But man as a particular being is the distinct otherness of God. The unity of Infinite and finite Spirit is not to be superficially conceived; it is not an immediate unity, as if God were only man, and man immediately divine. Finite spirit is joined with God only so far as it annuls its natural particularity. In the limited natural state of his being, man is the antithesis of the Universal, or God in-himself. The nature of the human creature _en masse_ is mind, and, according to Hegel, this

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[11] _Ibid._, XVI, 198. [12] _Ibid._, p. 94.

[13] _Philosophy of History_, p. 324.

nature has a twofold characteristic: "(i) at one extreme, explicit individuality of consciousness and will, and (ii) at the other extreme, universality which knows and wills what is substantive."[14]

Man represents the determinate distinction in reality. Universality of idea in-itself, ultimate rationality, is opposed by the explicitly particular consciousness. Universal Mind in and by itself, as represented in the categories of Science of Logic, is negated by mind for-itself as mind is self-conscious, limited, finite being. Universal Right is negated in the particularity of selfish will. However, both moments present necessary aspects of the whole. It is the negation of Mind in-itself in mind for-itself which leads to the ultimate positive moment of the self-conscious Absolute Mind in-and-for-itself. And it is the repudiation of the selfish will, as over against the Universal Will, which leads to the realized actual state of morality in which the particular will is in harmony with the Universal as the Right.

The being of man sets forth the whole spectrum of opposition to Universality, and yet this being as reconciled is also the moment in which Universality is conscious of itself. The phenomena of man's being, historically and individually conceived, begin, in Hegel's analysis, with the inchoate consciousness which he designates as "Soul." The level of being

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[14] Philosophy of Right, p. 163.

expressed by soul in this sense is the simplest possible being; it is not even conscious to the degree of sense perception but is simply "the substance or 'absolute' basis of all the particularising and individualising of mind. . . ."[15]

The first phase in the development of the phenomena of mind is consciousness. Herein the rudimentary being of soul undergoes the determination of consciousness--the distinction of subject and object. What is potential in being as soul, that is, in the principle of particularity, is explicit in consciousness. The first stage of consciousness is immediate awareness of an other--the sensuous consciousness. The abstract phenomenon of sensuous consciousness in developed form becomes the perceptive being of man. Man as creature expresses objectivity as such. He shares the nature of the material in his immediate awareness through the sensuous consciousness. But man's being as subject over against an object of which he is aware involves a fundamental contradiction since the object is related to the subject according to conscious perception, that is, by the categories of the understanding. This relationship which is enunciated as simple awareness of an other becomes in conscious awareness the content of the subject's understanding. For Hegel, the object as such has no actuality or meaning in itself; it exists, but only as an abstraction. The being of man unites subject and object in the joining of

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15. Philosophy of Mind, p. 12.

the sensuous apprehension and the universality of the categories according to which the object is perceived. This is mind functioning as understanding, which distinguishes between appearance and universality. The independence of the object as it appears in immediate awareness is, accordingly, overcome in the developing conscious being of man.

The next phase of the unfolding of human nature is negation of the separation in consciousness. Man as man is, with this development, self-conscious being. The object as a "this" over against the subject is transcended, and, in self-consciousness, the subject recognizes the object to be itself. As this level of being is articulated, the subject comprehends that the objects of sense are really the expressions of universals and that universals are nothing more than the content of the subject itself set forth in terms of the categories of the understanding.

Rational intelligence is delineated in the last stage of the phenomenon of man's being. The unity of separation and union--the identity of opposites, the identity in difference--which describes Hegel's presentation of reason, is set forth in man's being as rational intelligence. Although Hegel distinguishes between finite and Infinite Mind, he views the activity of mind as necessarily terminating in rational, infinite thought. "It is," Hegel declares, "the very essence of thought to be infinite." He goes on to explain that to call a thing finite is to say that it is limited; that it has an end; that

it is limited by an other:

> The finite therefore subsists in reference to its other, which is its negation and presents itself as its limit. Now thought is always in its own sphere; its relations are with itself, and it is its own object. In having a thought for object, I am at home with myself. The thinking power, the 'I,' is therefore infinite, because, when it thinks, it is in relation to an object which is itself.[16]

Hegel's Philosophy of Mind presents the pattern of the development of what he considered to be man's true being. This teleologically determined process leads inevitably to the being of man as "Free Mind," that is, self-determined Mind or Reason. The true being of man, which is implicit in mind as soul and mind as consciousness, actualizes itself in Mind as Reason. The development of the being of man sets forth the content of reason as differentiation and reconciliation; the being of man articulates the actuality of the whole, the unity of essence and manifestation.

In his most abstract moment, man partakes of the simple nature of particularity. He is a creature of consciousness in his sensuous awareness; in process of his development, man becomes self-conscious. Through the categorizing of perception, his being as mind develops in terms of the categories of distinction and determination of understanding. And in so far as he joins the universal and the particular in his consciousness, he is, as Reason, the articulation of ultimate rationality or

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16. The Logic, p. 62.

Absolute Mind. The process of the development from sentient to rational consciousness actualizes kinship with the Absolute. Accordingly, man is comprehended in the idea of God both as the explicit moment of differentiation and as the moment of consciousness in the self-consciousness of Absolute Mind. The latter is the effected community of Idea.

Since Hegel's concern to present reality as a unified whole found its principal expression in terms of a system which negated the epistemological isolation of subject and object, both in thought and reality, his analysis of man's nature centered in the poetic being of man. Man is essentially mind;[17] therefore, Hegel's system culminates in absolute knowledge, and philosophy is regarded as the pinnacle of human activity. "Philosophy is knowledge," he writes, "and it is through knowledge that man first realises his original vocation, to be the image of God."[18] Although Hegel insists that man is primarily thought, he also recognizes that man feels and wills. The feeling, or commitment of the heart, cannot express in the proper self-determined form the absolute union of the finite with the Infinite, but it may accurately characterize the essential nature of the unified whole of reality. Thus man, believing with his heart in the reconciliation of man and God, has a sense of the community of Spirit.

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[17] Ibid., p. 47.

[18] Ibid., p. 56.

Mind molding, determining, the world according to its content describes practical mind--man as will. Here also developed humanity is a progression through particularity, consciousness of self-will, to universality. The natural will involves the same essential distinction expressed in the self-consciousness of mind. "The natural will is implicitly the contradiction of self-distinction, of being both inwardness and also self awareness."[19] This self awareness, the translator of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, T. M. Knox, notes, signifies both universality and particularity, that is, the awareness of the self will in contrast to the Universal Will. Natural will is negated as man actualizes his true reality in its determination by the Universal. Even as man as consciousness is potentially man as Reason, so man as self will is potentially man as the Right. "Free Mind" and "Free Will" signify the same essential content. "Right is by definition," Hegel asserts, "Freedom as Idea,"[20] that is, it is the self-determination of the Universal in the particular.

The end of a process determines the content for Hegel. The being of man, consequently, is teleologically determined. Thus Hegel declares that "man is by nature good," and means by this that man is "potentially (an sich) Spirit, rationality;

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19. "Additions," Philosophy of Right, p. 256.

20. Philosophy of Right, p. 33.

he is created with and according to the image of God."[21] Man is mind (Geist), and as such, he is, in one sense, the moment in which Universal Mind, Rationality, is conscious of itself; and, in another sense, he is the negation of universality in particularity. When the essential contradiction of potential universal and actual particular consciousness is transmuted, the final positive moment is actualized. God is Absolute Mind; man as man is particular mind--"God is good; and man as spirit is the reflection (Spiegel) of God, he is potentially (an sich) good."[22] In the context of this statement of man's potential nature, Hegel goes on to state that "the possibility of his reconciliation is grounded in this fact alone; the difficulty, the ambiguity lies, however, in potentiality (Ansich)."[23] The implicit nature of man's existence is the definitive characteristic of his being; the unrealized potentiality is the defect or fault of his existence.

c. Origin and Nature of Evil

The correlate of Hegel's statement that "man is by nature good" is his affirmation that "man is by nature evil." Man's being as potentiality (Ansichseyn), his naturalness (Natürlichseyn), is evil.[24] The defect or evil of human existence is

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[21] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 258.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., p. 259.

immediately present in his being--"because he is spirit, he is, by the same determination, the differentiation; particularity is in this naturalness immediately presented. If man is only natural, he is evil."[25] In his naturalness, man is evil, because, as so considered, he is the abstract self-identity opposed to concrete universality. The natural intellectual activity of man is particularity of consciousness; the natural morality of man is his selfish will.

The essential determination of the Universal by negation, expressed in theological categories, is evil or sin. The problem of evil is really one expression of the basic problem for Hegel's thought of distinction and negation, the problem, that is, of how the negative is related to the positive moment. Hegel is not satisfied with simply stating both; he seeks to find the necessity--the inherent, self-determined, the rational explanation--of opposition, negation, evil. The abstract method of the understanding, following its basic principle of identity, cannot solve the problem of opposition, but merely places positive and negative, thesis and antithesis, good and evil over against one another. Hegel seeks to rationally comprehend both moments by discovering them in one another. He states his solution to the problem in terms of Begriff, the rational notion, which means the self-determination of Idea in its opposite. Herein is enunciated Hegel's principle of the

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[25] Ibid., p. 260.

identity of opposites. No idea, or being, is in-itself; actuality is attained in-and-for-self; differentiation is the essential principle of thought and being. Consequently, evil is not a rupture of the universal order, but is an essential moment of divine history, and, therefore, relatively good.

In its instinctive stage of inchoate selfness, the life of man is immediate and is generally regarded as "innocent"; but, Hegel notes, "the very essence of spirit implies the absorption of this immediate condition in something higher."[26] The nature of man essentially gives rise to self-consciousness. His natural being involves "this inward breach" to which the whole of finite action and thought belongs.[27]

Hegel's analysis of evil leads to the ambiguous judgment that evil ought not to be and that evil is absolutely necessary. It is necessary for man, because it is just this diremption which establishes man as man--"as to the necessity of evil, it is subjectivity, as infinite self-reflection, which is present in and confronted by this opposition of universal and particular; . . ."[28] The implicit content of instinctive selfness is realized in the conscious awareness; man as man passes from immediate to mediate being. Since man is mind, he essentially

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26. The Logic, p. 54.

27. Ibid., p. 57.

28. Philosophy of Right, p. 93.

involves the development of reasoning and mediation,[29] and this leads inevitably to abstract self-certainty which, in its separateness, is evil. "For the very notion of spirit," Hegel writes, "is enough to show that man is evil by nature."[30] The religious myth of the fall, accordingly, represents not a chance occurence but the eternal, necessary history of mankind.[31] But the necessity of evil goes beyond the essential development of man's nature. Evil denotes the moment of differentiation in the Absolute as a whole. Evil, for Hegel, is not simply a necessary ingredient in the good, nor is it simply necessary to bring about the greatest amount of good, but evil as particularity, as differentiation, is an essential aspect or moment of Absolute Spirit--a moment of the divine history.

Evil is the conscious assertion of particular mind. God is universal consciousness; therefore, only in a consciousness opposed to universality can otherness or differentiation be expressed. Evil originates--or stated in mythical terms, the fall occurs--in the determinate self-conscious existence of man. This history of spirit finds mythical representation in the Old Testament account of the fall:

> Man, created in the image of God, lost, it is said, his state of absolute contentment, by eating the Tree of the Knowledge

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[29] The Logic, p. 57.

[30] Ibid., p. 56.

[31] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 258.

> of Good and Evil. Sin consists here only in Knowledge: this is the sinful element, and by it man is stated to have trifled away his Natural happiness. This is a deep truth, that *evil lies in consciousness*: for the brutes are neither evil nor good; the merely Natural Man quite as little. Consciousness occasions the separation of the Ego, in its boundless freedom as arbitrary choice, from the pure essence of the Will--i.e. from the Good. Knowledge, as the disannuling of the unity of mere Nature, is the 'Fall,' which is no causal conception, but the eternal history of Spirit. For the state of innocence, the paradisaical condition, is that of the brute. Paradise is a park, where only brutes, not men, can remain. For the brute is one with God only implicitly [not consciously]. Only Man's Spirit (that is) has a self-cognizant existence. *This existence for self, this consciousness, is at the same time separation from the Universal and Divine Spirit*. If I hold to my abstract freedom, in contraposition to the Good, I adopt the standpoint of Evil. The Fall is therefore the eternal Mythus of Man--in fact, *the very transition by which he becomes man*. Persistence in this standpoint is, however, Evil . . . ."[32]

Knowledge constitutes man's likeness to God. In simple awareness this image is only a potential possibility of man's being. As awareness is reflected into itself, it becomes a knowing consciousness. Man's natural being leads inevitably to diremption; man is evil as he maintains this particular consciousness in opposition to the universal. The evil, the defect, of man's being is his existence in mere potentiality. Man's true nature is his *telos*, his vocation to be the image of God as rational mind--the union of particularity and universality.[33] He is evil inasmuch as he is abstract, particular mind.

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[32] *Philosophy of History*, pp. 321-322. Italics mine. Cf. *Werke*, bd. XVI, pp. 73-77. Hegel presents in this section a detailed analysis of the Old Testament story of the fall as a picturing of the eternal history of the human spirit.

[33] *The Logic*, p. 56.

It follows that, for Hegel, the mythical story of the fall of man is a way of picturing the advance of man. Sin is not the worse state any more than self-consciousness is the lowest form of the phenomenon of Mind. The worse state is innocence, and the perfect state is reconciliation. This reconciliation, however, is only realized through separation, even as reason is realized by negating particular self-consciousness. Sin, therefore, is not evil but an aspect of good. It is only evil as this state of existence for self is confined by itself. Relatively, sin is superior to innocence, and "the fall" is really the advance of man, the necessary prior condition of his salvation.

The existence for self is evil; in Hegel's judgment, it ought not to be. It is a limited, imperfect being. The self-consciousness of man has the potential either of consciously realizing in itself the Universal or, conversely, of taking the particular content, its being for-self, as its principle. The latter condition is evil. All men are determined by nature to self consciousness, this is Hegel's doctrine of original sin, but they need not, and in their true being do not, remain what they are as naturally determined. But so far as man is mere potentiality, man is adjudged by Hegel to be sinful. The evil lies in the fact that what man is potentially, he is not actually, and what he is actually is other than what he is potentially. Potentially, man is Spirit, that is, spirit

conscious of itself as Spirit; actually, man is evil, that is, isolated finite spirit.

An evil man, as an untrue idea, is abstract, incomplete, inadequate, unrealized potentiality.[34] He is discrete self-identity--"a mere natural life may be more exactly defined by saying that the natural man as such is an individual: for nature in every part is in the bonds of individualism. Thus when man wills to be a creature of nature, he wills in the same degree to be an individual simply."[35] Unrealized potentiality, in existence and idea, leads to the condemnation of being evil in the first case, because of abstract self-assertion of being, and of being untrue in the second case, because of abstract self-identity of idea. Man as finite is incomplete; he signifies the diremption which only is actual and real as the other of God. If the negative moment is held as an absolute in-itself, it is nothing more than itself and admits only of negative being. It is, accordingly, evil. The being of man is "inadequacy in general." "Opposition, evil, is the naturalness of human existence and will--its immediateness; this is thus the characteristic of naturalness--finiteness is

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[34] As described from the perspective of intellectual activity, sinfulness is the absolute maintenance of the finite in reflection. This is the charge which Hegel repeatedly directed against Kant. The finite consciousness in Kant's system, Hegel insists, is the ultimate; and the result of this subjective idealism is "I, this finite, am the infinite." Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, p. 200.

[35] The Logic, p. 57 (italics mine).

determined by immediateness. And this finiteness or naturalness is inadequate by itself to perceive the universality of God, who in himself is absolutely free--infinite eternal Idea."[36] Thus natural finite being, being simply for-self, is inadequate, incomplete--evil.

As a result of the "fall" man lives in "a state of internal discord."[37] He is alienated from the Universal and exists simply by himself. Sin is the essential diremption of finite existence; it is the state of man in his failure to realize community with God. It is the essential inadequacy of the moment of negation by itself.

In this manner, Hegel's system allows him to hold to both the rational necessity of evil and to the judgment that it ought not to be. For Hegel, it is not enough to simply set good and evil in juxtaposition; they must be comprehended as essential moments of divine history. They are contained in each other even as diremption is essential to the rational Idea. According to Hegel, "everything is opposed. . . . whatever is, is concrete, with difference and opposition in itself."[38] Human existence is the moment of the differentiation of the universal in its own opposite--particular consciousness. This moment is essential in Hegel's system for the articulation

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[36] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 280.

[37] Philosophy of History, p. 322.

[38] Werke, bd. VIII, System der Philosophie, p. 280.

of the final positive moment of the self-consciousness of Absolute Spirit. Differentiation is essential to the whole which Hegel defines in terms of the unity of separation and union, but by itself differentiation ought not to be, because, as it is by itself, it is merely a part of a whole; it is isolated, imperfect, inadequate. To absolutize the part is to falsify, to make untrue, to sin. Only as the part is in the community of the whole is it truth, reality, actuality.

2. Reconciliation

The philosophy of Hegel is a systematic statement of the reconciliation of antitheses designed ultimately to effect the union of thought and reality in which Mind articulates, as rational intelligible, the unified, concrete, whole of Absolute Reality. This fundamental determination to reconciliation pervades all of his thought.

The task of logic, Hegel writes in the preface to the second edition of _Science of Logic_, is first to bring the categories of the mind into clear consciousness. The most important point, however, is not merely a relation of what mind is in itself to its positive existence, but the relation "of that as which it _knows itself_, to that which it is in actuality."[39] As so related, idea is reconciled in the category of notion;

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[39] _Science of Logic_, I, 46.

it is real; it is the same for it to be and to be what it is. The reconciliation of Idea in-itself is a first description of the reconciliation of reality; rational Idea, Notion, presents an abstract statement of the ultimate reconciliation of reality as a whole. Idea is not in-itself, but is for-itself in its differentiation, and is in-and-for-itself in the synthesis of identity in difference.

> The Idea, as unity of Subjective and Objective Idea, is the notion of the Idea,--a notion whose object (Gegenstand) is the Idea as such, and for which the objective (Objekt) is Idea,--an Object which embraces all characteristics in its unity. This unity is consequently the absolute and all truth, the Idea which thinks itself,--and here at least as a thinking or Logical Idea.[40]

The transmuting of the diremption of subjective idea and objective idea actualizes the self-determined content of Notion, Idea in-and-for itself.

The reconciliation considered in logic is abstract; it is concerned with pure idea. But the essential significance of Truth or Reality as unity in distinction and as freedom, that is, the self-determined explication of implicit content, is articulated in Idea. "The *Idea* is truth in itself and for itself,--the absolute unity of notion and objectivity."[41] Hegel states that this determination of idea may be described in many ways: "It may be called reason (and this is the proper

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[40] *The Logic*, pp. 373-374.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 352.

philosophical signification of reason); subject-object; the unity of the ideal and the real, of finite and infinite, of soul and body; the possibility which has its actuality in its own self; that of which the nature can be thought only as existent, etc."[42]

The phenomenon of man's being taken as a whole presents a development culminating in the reconciliation of Mind. Man's true being is his progression through stages of consciousness and self-consciousness to the negation of his separateness in the actualization of reconciliation with the Absolute in Absolute Knowledge. The final moment is reached when the self-conscious being is no longer distinct from Universality. In the phenomenology of Mind, man is determined to reconciliation; Hegel's "science of the experience of consciousness" issues inevitably in the reunion of finite mind with Absolute Mind.[43]

The _System of Philosophy_, which Hegel regarded as a comprehensive survey of the philosophical sciences, is a rational

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[42] _Ibid_., p. 355.

[43] Discussing the _Phenomenology of Mind_ in his "Introduction" to Hegel's _Early Theological Writings_, Richard Kroner asserts that by the negation of the natural consciousness and the despair of self, man reaches "the point of salvation" in the _Phenomenology_. This account, Kroner writes, "is the story of inner struggles which finally reach the stage of Christian experience and dogma. It is through speculative salvation that the tragic discord of the soul is removed. Accordingly, the book is called the 'Science of the Experience of consciousness,' 'a science of the experience through which consciousness passes.' Its significance is not primarily historical but rather philosophic and religious" (_Early Theological Writings_, p. 47).

analysis, in broad sweeping survey, of the whole of reality. The first part of his study is the science of idea in-itself--*The Logic*; the second part is idea for-itself, idea in its objectivity--*Philosophy of Nature*; and the final part of the encyclopedic presentation, *The Philosophy of Mind*, is the articulation of the synthesis of Idea, the accomplished reconciliation of Idea in-and-for-itself in reason as Absolute Mind.

Hegel's philosophical analyses of art, morality, religion, and his ideologically stated studies of history and the history of philosophy exhibit, one and all, this same determination to reconciliation. The self-determined dialectic concluding inevitably in the moment of synthesis or reconciliation, which is systematically stated in terms of pure idea in *Science of Logic*, provides Hegel with his understanding of the essential character of all human experience and thought, of all human development and culture. The various aspects of human existence may differ in the form and completeness of their expression of the reconciliation of Absolute Unity, but the same eternal process effecting spiritual community is set forth in all these various aspects. The process is true of all human life because the fundamental nature of the human creature is mind, idea, which as mind is inherently a dialectical process of identity in difference. Man as mind is potentially Absolute Idea. The science, the history of human existence and thought in its manifold nature is the science and history of the actualization of what is the potential, implicit being (*Ansichseyn*) of man.

a. Process of Reconciliation

As was stated earlier in this study, reconcilement presumes a prior condition of separation, differentiation; for Hegel, this distinction signifies not mere separation but direct opposition, negation, antithetical relation. Reconcilement is the positive result of a process in which the negative relation, differentiation, separation, is transmuted. The unity effected in the moment of reconcilement cannot be a simple unity of singleness, but is necessarily a unity of opposites, a unity involving difference, a synthesis of that which is antithetically opposed. According to this schema, or process, the Ultimate is essentially this concrete, spiritual, reconciled reality, and as such, it is to be contrasted with the Ultimate cast in terms of an abstract, self-identical, absolute Substance. The truth of the Absolute, as Hegel presents it in his Philosophy of Religion, is that God is living Spirit; and as living Spirit, the Absolute distinguishes itself from itself by positing what is separated from itself and then establishing itself in community with this other--"the opposition eternally arises, even so eternal negates itself; and just so is eternal reconcilement."[44]

Reconciliation is a process of the negation of opposition, of the articulation of synthesis, of the actualization of

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[44] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 279.

community. Reconciliation is, therefore, both the completed fact and the process of realization; it is the negation of negation, the unity in differentiation; it is the positive moment in the dialectical process, a moment which is at once the determining process of synthesis and the determination itself.

The meaning of reconciliation in human experience may be instructively examined by reference to the synthesis articulated in the section "The Notion" of Science of Logic.[45] The subjective notion of formal logic is examined by Hegel under the categories: Universal, Particular, Individual. The point of this discussion which has bearing on the understanding of the reconciliation of the finite spirit and the Infinite Spirit is the relation of universal and particular in the individual. Individuality negates the isolation of particularity and is the reconcilement of the universal and particular. Universal is determined in its opposite, the particular; it is in this distinction that the universal has its meaning; therefore, the universal is determined by itself for itself in its other. As the reconciliation, individuality, the notion in its full statement, is the union of universal and particular; but it is such only in the completed dialectic of relation.

The abstract analysis of idea in-itself in Hegel's Science of Logic is remote from the idea of spiritual community

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[45] Science of Logic, II, 234-257.

in life, but the nature of the community of idea as individual is indicative of the nature of spiritual community in life. The reconciliation of man is accomplished as man is the self-conscious individual; man as individual in this sense is the negation of particularity; he is the individual, not as singular, but as universal; he is the universal determined as particular. God, Hegel asserts, posits the other as his self-differentiation and is reconciled to himself in the self-conscious universality of the other. "Reconciliation is the negation of this separation, this division, [in order to] know self in its other, to find itself and its essence."[46]

At the other extreme from the analysis of pure idea in logic, the process of reconciliation is represented by Hegel's survey of the positive historical development in individual experience and in the consciousness of mankind as a whole. In so far as man is isolated in his self-consciousness from the universal consciousness, his life is merely self-identical particular being, the distinct other of God. What is needed is the healing of this breach; the healing is accomplished in the developed rational consciousness of man. Under the general heading of the consideration of man as Spirit certain of itself in morality, Hegel writes that--

> with the completion of conscience, the distinction between its abstract consciousness and its self-consciousness is done away.

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[46] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 208.

> It knows that the abstract consciousness is just this self, this individual self-existence which is certain of itself: that the very difference between the terms is abolished in the immediateness of the relation of the self to the ultimate Being, which when placed outside the self, is the abstract essence, and a Being concealed from it.[47]

Reconciliation is the process of negating separation; the completed fact of reconcilement is the return of the subject into its essence. It is the transmutation of antithesis and the adoption in actual self-consciousness of the unity of Spirit. In the context of the discussion of morality, Hegel writes--

> Having risen above the meaningless position of holding these distinctions, which are not distinctions at all, to be still such, consciousness knows the immediateness of the presence of ultimate Being within it to be the unity of that Being and its self: it thus knows itself to be the living inherent reality, and knows its knowledge to be Religion, which, qua knowledge viewed as an object or knowledge with an objective existence, is the utterance of the religious communion regarding its own spirit.[48]

The true individual, or spiritual man, man as accomplished reconcilement, is a conscious union of Infinite and finite Spirit. This is the actualization of the potentiality of man's being in which his essence and existence coincide; it is the same for him to be and to be what he is. In this consciousness man rises above the "meaningless position" of holding to isolated distinct being by negating his natural consciousness,

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[47]. The Phenomenology, p. 664.

[48]. Ibid., pp. 664-665. As Hegel uses the word "Religion" above it has the significance of the conscious union of the Infinite and the finite.

and is reconciled to God in the comprehension of the unity of Ultimate Being and the self--the unity of Absolute Spirit.

Even as Hegel's science of the experience of consciousness follows the development of Spirit to reconciliation, so also his philosophical analysis of world history recounts the realization of spiritual community. The "ultimate purpose" of world history is "the Idea in general, in its manifestation as human spirit. . . . More precisely, it is the idea of human freedom."[49] World history thus exhibits the history of Spirit seeking to attain its own nature, to actualize its potential being as Spirit conscious of itself. After surveying the internal discord of human nature as it becomes self-conscious in the course of world history, Hegel asserts that this discord produces, or results in, a feeling of pain or longing for reconciliation with reality in itself. Man seeks to find relief in satisfaction of the self-identity of finite temporal existence. The Jews, for example, sought repose in the land of Canaan, the belief that they were the chosen people, and the worship life of the temple. When this inadequate basis for harmony was lost they experienced a sense of misery and despair. According to Hegel's account, the Roman world, in its assumption of an empty absolute of state and particular man, likewise experienced a sense of despair. "Jewish feeling,"

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[49] Reason in History, pp. 21-22. Freedom signifies self-contained self-determination.

Hegel notes, "persists in acknowledging Reality and desires harmony and reconciliation within its sphere; for that feeling is based on the Oriental Unity of Nature--i.e. the unity of Reality, of Subjectivity, with the substance of the One Essential Being."[50] Accordingly, the Roman world, and specifically, Jewish life, provided the setting for the comprehension of reconciliation. "Through the loss of mere outward reality Spirit is driven back within itself. . . ." and, Hegel notes, reality is redefined as the Universal One. This definition Hegel contrasts with the Oriental antithesis of light and darkness. The antithesis, as redefined in Jewish thought, involves the separation of Spirit, and darkness, or the other of God, becomes sin. The possibility of reconciliation is now present; and its actuality appears upon the scene of world history:

> For the abnegation of reality there is no compensation but Subjectivity itself--the Human Will as intrinsically universal; and thereby alone does reconciliation become possible. Sin is the discerning of Good and Evil as separation; but this discerning likewise heals the ancient hurt, and is the fountain of infinite reconciliation. The discerning in question brings with it the destruction of that which is external and alien in consciousness, and is consequently the return of Subjectivity into itself. This, then, adopted into the actual self-consciousness of the World is the Reconciliation [atonement] of the world. From the unrest of infinite sorrow--in which the two sides of the antithesis stand related to each other--is developed the unity of God with Reality (which latter had been posited as negative) i.e., with Subjectivity which had been separated from Him. The infinite loss is counterbalanced only by its infinity, and thereby becomes infinite gain. The recognition of the identity of the Subject and God was introduced

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[50] Philosophy of History, p. 323.

> into the world when _the fulness of Time was come_: the consciousness of this identity is the recognition of God in his true essence. The material of Truth is _Spirit_ itself--inherent vital movement. The nature of God as pure Spirit, is manifested to man _in the Christian Religion_.[51]

According to Hegel, the idea of God articulated in the Christian religion enunciates in world history the reconciliation which overcomes the separation of God and man.

b. Religious Consciousness

The religious consciousness signifies reconciliation. Hegel defines the religious consciousness in broad perspective as "consciousness of Absolute Being in general."[52] By this definition, Hegel asserts that the essential signification of religious awareness is the comprehension of a status of being in communion with that which is regarded as Absolute. The fundamental determination of Religion is thus the joining of the Infinite and the finite. While this communion may be imperfect realized in a particular expression of religion, it is the essential character of religion in general, and is, therefore, found in all religions.

The criterion by which Hegel evaluates positive religions is the degree to which reconciliation is actual in the religious

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[51] _Ibid_.

[52] _The Phenomenology_, p. 685.

consciousness. The true religious communion, in which the sense of unity is an actuality, is the religious statement of the universal self-consciousness of Spirit. Spirit (Geist) is one and yet it is distinct in its moments as self-conscious finite spirit and Absolute Spirit. The perfected religious consciousness is the actualized reconcilement--"the completion of religion consists in the two forms becoming identical with one another: not merely in its reality being grasped and embraced by religion, but conversely--it, as spirit conscious of itself, becomes actual to itself, and real object of its own consciousness."[53]

Christianity expresses, for Hegel, the completion of religion, the absolute religion, because it accurately represents the moment in which the need for reconciliation is most completely realized and because it issues in the actualized reconcilement of Absolute Spirit.[54] The differentiation of the Absolute in its own other, the alienation of the finite spirit

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[53] Ibid., p. 688.

[54] In the Christian religion, Hegel writes, the need for reconciliation is most acutely felt. This is so because: (1) it begins with a sense of division or estrangement; man appears in this religion as evil from birth, as essentially estranged; (2) actualization of reconciliation predicates this same sense of estrangement in that the manner in which it is first viewed is as something given to man; it is set forth on the authority of the activity of God; (3) finally, when this reconciliation is realized it is referred into the self as something accomplished within the individual. The feeling of sinfulness and the realization of reconciliation is within the individual. Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, pp. 34-35.

from God, stated in the forms of the religion in Christianity, represents man as having been created in the image of God and as having fallen from this union into a state of sin. The antithesis of finitude is developed by Christian theology in the dogma of original sin. Man by his natural existence is alienated from God, or more precisely, in terms of Hegel's analysis of the Christian faith, his natural being is in fundamental contradiction with his potential. This contradiction is a fundamental want of correspondence between man and God; man is separated from his essence; he is something which he ought not to be.[55] Man is the other of God, the particular consciousness opposed to the universal consciousness; the evil of his being "appears as the first actual expression of the self-concentrated consciousness."[56] In his natural state, man is sinful in that he is a conscious assertion of self as over against God, and as such, he is alienated from God in sin.

The principal basis, in reference to religious consciousness, by which Hegel evaluates Christianity is, however, not the negative moment of man's nature, but the positive moment of reconciliation which he finds expressed by Christian faith. The Christian religion, for Hegel, expresses the completed consciousness of reconciliation, for in the Christian religion, "this concrete God is beheld sensuously and immediately as a

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[55] Ibid., XVI, 272 ff.

[56] Phenomenology of Mind, p. 771.

self, as a real individual human being; only so is it a self-consciousness."[57] This realized community, this incarnation of Divine Being, as it is taken over into the consciousness of man, is the actual reconcilement of Spirit. Christianity is the fulfillment in religion of the history of Spirit, the moment to which the developing phenomenon of consciousness presses on; it is the moment in which is expressed the nature of Absolute Spirit as Spirit conscious of itself. "Ultimate Reality is then and not till then," Hegel writes, "known as Spirit when it is seen and beheld as immediate self-consciousness."[58] And in this self-conscious unity of Spirit, depicted as incarnate in Jesus Christ and taken over into the consciousness of man in the Christian religion, the reconcilement of God and man is actualized.

"The salvation and the blessedness of men are attained when they come to feel themselves at one with God, so that God, on the other hand, ceases to be for them mere object. . . ."[59] God, Hegel goes on to say, has revealed himself as love in the Son, who is one with God; He has manifested himself "to men as a man amongst men, and thereby redeemed them." This means that God has set forth the nature of reconciled consciousness in which separation is negated. It signifies that "the antithesis of subjective and objective is implicitly overcome,

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[57] Ibid., p. 758.   [58] Ibid., p. 761.

[59] The Logic, p. 335.

and that it is our affair to participate in this redemption by laying aside our immediate subjectivity (putting off the old Adam), and learning to know God as our true and essential self."[60] This realization of reconciliation has a correlate in philosophy--"Just as religion and religious worship consists in overcoming the antithesis of subjectivity and objectivity, so science and philosophy have no other task than to overcome this antithesis by the medium of thought. The aim of knowledge is to divest the objective world that stands opposed to us of its strangeness, and . . . to trace the objective world back to the notion,--to our innermost self."[61]

Evil is the being for self of finite consciousness. Salvation is the negation of this sinful state, the seclusion (Abgeschiedenheit) of the consciousness of man enclosed in temporality and change, and it signifies his being in community, which, as the reconcilement with universal consciousness, raises man above time and change.[62] This community of Spirit is the absolute moment of unity, a unity which transcends the abstraction of temporality, a unity which is the very being of Absolute Spirit in-and-for-itself. "The eternal life of the Christian," this religious consciousness of union with the Absolute, is, according to Hegel, "the Spirit of God himself;

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[60] Ibid. [61] Ibid.

[62] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, pp. 88-89.

the Spirit of God is just this--his self-conscious being as Divine Spirit."[63]

The form in which this consciousness of reconciliation is expressed in religion is faith. By faith, that is, by the subjective assurance of the universal in the particular, Christ is known as the Divine Being united with the natural being, in whom the other worldly (Jenseits) being of God is negated.[64] This conviction produces the new consciousness of the individual--the consciousness of union of the natural and the Divine. "Since it refers to a new consciousness of man, . . . it is accordingly the consciousness of absolute reconcilement; with it a new world is involved, a new religion, a new reality, another world determination; for the external existence, the primal being, has for its subsistence religion."[65] It is the conviction of the being of man. This is the "love of the Divine Idea in the individual"; it is the conscious "recognition of the divine in the individual." This, Hegel asserts, is the greatest miracle, the greatest wonder--the very being of Spirit Itself.[66]

Man realizes this consciousness when he overcomes his natural being. This is conceivable only on the basis of the conviction of the unity of the divine and the human. The role of Christ in the realization of the religious consciousness of

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[63] Ibid., p. 410.

[64] Ibid., XVI, 287.

[65] Ibid., p. 288.

[66] Ibid., p. 310.

reconciliation is the presentation of the Divine Idea, the unity of the Divine and the Human. This that is represented in Christ must become the actual being of man; man must become convinced of "the essentiality and substantiality that belongs to the idea of Deity"; he must become conscious of this unity. "The condition of the mediation in question is the consciousness of this unity; and the intuition of this unity was given to man in Christ. The object to be attained is therefore, that man should lay hold on this consciousness, and that it should be continually excited in him."[67] Faith is not, for Hegel, "a bare assurance respecting finite things. . . . In fact it is not a belief in something that is absent, past and gone, but the subjective assurance of the Eternal, of Absolute Truth, the Truth of God."[68] The conscious realization of the Spirit in the individual alone is the efficacious cause of this faith. This, Hegel asserts, is the significance of the doctrine that the Holy Spirit alone produces this faith for the individual consciousness. This doctrine Hegel interprets as meaning that faith "is an assurance which the individual attains, not in virtue of his particular idiosyncrasy, but of his essential being."[69] In the moment of reconciliation, therefore, is the consciousness of the essentiality, the substantiality of the Divine Idea. Faith is first a man, that is,

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[67] Philosophy of History, p. 377.

[68] Ibid., p. 415.

[69] Ibid.

Christ, and then it is a spiritual community: "the origin of faith is first _a man_, [one exhibiting] human characteristics (_eine menschliche_), sensible appearance, and then [it becomes] spiritual manifestation, consciousness of the spiritual; it is spiritual content, the transformation of immediacy into spiritual determination."[70] Christ, accordingly, is the first expression of the religious consciousness; and faith in Christ is essentially spiritual; its reference is not to a sensible event as such, not to the events of the life of Jesus, but to the realization of the same consciousness of unity, or reconcilement.

Answering the charges of scoffers influenced by the rational enlightenment that faith is based on chance knowledge of chance circumstances, Hegel argues in _The Phenomenology_[71] that religious consciousness of Christian faith does not base its certainty on particular historical events. The historical evidence as so cited would not even warrant the degree of certainty which we have concerning events mentioned in the newspapers. Nor, he insists, does religious faith rest on preserved records which have value as transmitting an inspired accurate record, for this transmits only dead words and letters. Faith is not based on such evidences and fortuitous circumstances; rather the religious consciousness knows its object--

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[70] _Werke_, bd. XVI, _Philosophie der Religion_, p. 317.

[71] Pp. 572 ff.

> with a purity, which never mixes up letters, paper, or copyists with its consciousness of the Absolute Being, and does not make use of things of that sort to affect its union with the Absolute. On the contrary, this consciousness is the self-mediating, self-relating ground of its knowledge; it is spirit itself which bears witness of itself both in the inner heart of the individual consciousness, as well as through the presence everywhere and in all men of belief in it.[72]

The object of faith is not something which is before the subject in time, or separated from the subject as wholly other, but it is the unity of the universal consciousness and the self-consciousness. Accordingly, belief has "the right of the absolute self-identity or of pure thought."[73] The form of its representation, that is, its reference to objective historical events, is not essential to its content which is the realization of the spiritual community. As a result, although the Christian religion uses the imperfect form of expression, its content suggests the necessity, for Hegel, of the self-consciousness of Spirit in Absolute knowledge.

Each individual, Hegel notes, "has to accomplish the work of reconciliation in his own soul.--Subjective Spirit has to receive the Spirit of truth into itself, and give it a dwelling place there."[74] The spirit of Christ, or more accurately,

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[72] The Phenomenology, p. 573.

[73] Ibid., p. 581.

[74] Philosophy of History, p. 416. Hegel makes this statement in the context of his discussion of the new principle brought to light in the Reformation--the principle that there is no distinction between layman and priest in that both alike possess the truth as common property.

the consciousness of unity represented by the idea of Christ, fills the heart of the believer. "Christ therefore is not to be regarded as merely a historical person" for man "sustains an immediate relation to him in Spirit."[75] This relation, seen in the light of Hegel's systematic analysis of reconciliation of the Infinite and the finite, is one of duplication in the sense that man in his consciousness realizes the union denoted in the idea of Christ.

The consciousness of reconciliation is the work of the Divine Spirit realizing itself in its other. In these terms, Hegel analyzes the relation between man's activity and God's grace. Philosophy of Right argues the essential relation of the subjective consciousness of right and its universal reality: "The subjective right of self-consciousness to know whether an action is truly good or evil in character must not be thought of as so colliding with the absolute right of the objectivity of this character that the two rights are represented as separable, indifferent to one another, and related only accidentally."[76] Such a failure to note the essential relation between subjective consciousness and the Absolute is, according to Hegel, at the root of conflict over efficacious grace. Hegel seeks to present religious consciousness in rational terms, and for him this means that God and man cannot

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Philosophy of Right, p. 95.

be regarded as related accidentally, but must be necessarily involved in one another. If the grace of God is given to some, if the relation is that of externality, and some are related and some not, then God's grace and the consciousness of man are related accidentally and not essentially.

By its formal nature, Hegel notes, evil is the individual's own responsibility since it is by nature self-concerned conscious particularity, but man, in so far as he is mind, is by nature an integral moment of the history of the divine. Man, considered in terms of his implicit or potential nature, "accords with his concept inasmuch as he is mind, in a word a rational entity, and has in his own nature as such the character of self-knowing universality."[77] Therefore, when Hegel states the relation of God's free grace and man's activity in the traditional terms of the dependence of man upon God's grace, he does so within the context of this necessary relation of God and man. "It is," Hegel declares, "the divine Spirit which accomplishes the second birth of believers; this is free divine grace, for all that is divine is free . . . ."[78] The divine by its very nature is absolutely self-determined and is therefore free. But when Hegel sets forth what he means by free divine activity, in the effecting of the reconciliation of God and man, he gives this activity a distinctive significance. Man

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[77] Ibid.

[78] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 336.

as a natural being is potentially spirit. This potentiality becomes man's actual being as natural being-for-self, in its immediacy and particularity, is negated. From one perspective, this is the act of the subject, and from the other, it is the act of the divine Spirit.[79] This seemingly ambiguous analysis is the result of the Hegelian thesis that the two are not ultimately separated; they are not related accidentally, but are essentially related. Faith, Hegel insists, is the Divine Spirit working in the subject. However, the subject is not a passive receptacle into which something foreign is poured; rather, union with Absolute Spirit is the actualization of the potential of the subject. Thus freedom of the divine activity does not destroy human freedom; the relation is one of essentiality coming to consciousness; it is the activity of Spirit coming to be in the actual community of Spirit, its being in-and-for-itself.

3. Spiritual Community[80]

Human experience, both as individual and as world history, culminates finally for Hegel in conscious unity. Experience,

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[79] Ibid., pp. 336-337.

[80] The word "community" (Gemeinde), both in Hegel's writings and in this analysis of his thought, is used with several distinguishable, but not entirely distinct, meanings. Community refers to the consciousness of the interrelation of subject and object in knowledge and experience, that is, the conscious

as Hegel uses the word, signifies the consciousness of an interrelation of subject and object; and as he analyzes it, human experience presents a pattern of progress in the degree to which subject and object are interrelated. At the early stage of this development of interrelation, that is, as progression out of mere perception and consciousness, the subject becomes conscious of himself. This self-consciousness is "reflection out of the bare being that belongs to the world of sense and perception, and is essentially the return out of otherness."[81] The developing conscious experience proceeds from the level of self-conscious particularity to the universal self-consciousness, which, for Hegel, is the Absolute consciousness certain of itself throughout all experience. Absolute self-consciousness exists when consciousness is the object and the ego at the same time, which is "the unity of the different self-related and self-existent self-consciousness in the perfect freedom and

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reconciliation or communion of subject and object. Community also refers to the condition of being interrelated, to essential commonness or participation of subject and object in one another. In a narrow and objective sense, community is also used to designate a body of people with a common consciousness of reconciliation, such as the community of the state or the Christian community--the church. But in this specific designation, the word "community" is used to suggest, not so much the participation of a group in a relation of fellowship with each other, but the conscious interrelation of the group and its ultimate controlling principle or idea. In the religious body, it is the determination of the Absolute Spirit, God, in his other, the company of believers, which gives the group its essential significance as community.

[81] The Phenomenology, p. 219.

independence of their opposition as component elements of that substance: Ego that is 'we,' a plurality of Egos, and 'we' that is a single Ego."[82] Self-consciousness exists, according to Hegel, only in relation; it is actualized by only the fact that it exists for another; it has reality only in a community or relationship in which there is involved "acknowledgment" or "recognition."[83] The Absolute is actualized in its self-conscious being; it is Spirit which is object and subject as a perfect unity in difference. This is the climax of the process which is the actuality of Spirit--the community of infinite and finite spirit, the self-consciousness of the Absolute.

a. Religious Community

Religion, as a general designation, denotes the sphere of the Absolute, for religion signifies consciousness of union. It is to be regarded, Hegel states, "as objectively issuing from the absolute spirit which as spirit is in its community."[84] Spirit is recognized as differentiating itself in its other and returning to itself in the consciousness by which Spirit gains "its concrete determination, viz. reconciliation, the actuality of Spirit."[85] As represented in rational analysis, religion is "the self-consciousness of Absolute Spirit," and, Hegel goes on

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[82] Ibid., p. 227. [83] Ibid., pp. 229 ff.

[84] Philosophy of Mind, p. 167.

[85] Ibid., p. 168.

to state, religion is knowledge which Divine Spirit has concerning itself in finite spirit.[86] Spirit is infinite return into self. It finds its actuality (Gegenwartige) and reality (Wirkliche) when the estranged objectivity is returned to self. The perfected expression of religious consciousness is articulated in the Christian religion, and, explicitly, in spiritual communion--God and man. The highest moment of religion is that in which the Absolute is conscious of itself in its own other. This is the actuality of Spirit. "This is the Spirit of God, or God as actual true Spirit--God dwelling in his community (Gemeinde)."[87]

The union of infinite and finite Spirit is actualized in this consciousness of community. The Divine Idea is first *a* man, that is, it is first realized in specific particularity. Then the reality of this union finds expression in the consciousness of a religious community, by which particularity in general is reconciled to the Absolute in the unity of Spirit as actual, universal, self-consciousness. Thus the true community, established as sensible representation in *a* man, passes over into spiritual expression.[88] The Christian religion represents this absolute moment of the negation of particularity in the inner self-consciousness of religious community--the

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[86] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, p. 216.

[87] Ibid., XVI, 315.

[88] Ibid., p. 311.

church. In this perfected consciousness of Spirit, the community of Spirit, the Christian religion is _the_ spiritual religion, the reconciliation of infinite opposition, God and the world. It is this which is the final developed content of the Christian religion, and it is this which makes it the religion of spiritual consciousness for all men.

The sphere of community is the present realization of the Spirit in life. The objective expression of the real community "is what we, in [terms of a] generality, call the church."[89] This is spiritual community maintaining itself in positive existence. The church is the actualized idea of the Christian religion. It is a society of the followers of Christ, the believers who recognize in their lives the true idea of God articulated in the idea of Christ. "The church is a real present life in the Spirit of Christ."[90] This life is "The Kingdom of the Spirit," the actual conscious union of the Infinite and the finite which is first expressed by the consciousness of Christ. Accordingly, the Christian community is the idea of Christ realized in an actual consciousness of men. The influencing or determining spirit of the community is Christ--the consciousness of union.[91] This kingdom, therefore, is not a future expectation, but actual existence. The community consists

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[89] _Ibid_., p. 330.

[90] _Philosophy of History_, p. 328.

[91] _Ibid_., p. 332.

in "the subjects, the individuals, empirical subjects who are in the spirit of God."[92]

"The origin of the community," Hegel states, "is what appears as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit."[93] While the sensible manifestation in Jesus Christ of the union of God and man was present, the disciples did not receive the Spirit, but once this was gone, the Spirit came into their lives. The consciousness of reconciliation, accordingly, was represented in an outward form but was realized in the inner conviction of the believers. The Holy Spirit poured out on the disciples formed their immanent life in spiritual community and they went forth into the world to establish this as a universal community--the kingdom of God.

Within the church, the reconciliation takes the form of faith. According to Hegel, the community itself continues through the centuries to bring forth the content of faith.[94] Believing consciousness, the certainty of reconciliation, is produced, not by the words of the Bible, but by the community itself as it manifests its nature. It does so not by reference to a sensible object, but by the reality of Spirit in the life of the community.[95] The actuality of the community, Hegel argues, proclaims the fact that evil is overcome, that the

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[92] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 316.

[93] Ibid., p. 317.

[94] Ibid., p. 328.

[95] Ibid.

separation of God and man is negated, that finite spirit is united with God. Life in the community is established for the individual as he comes to the realization of this reconcilement. As a result, the history of "The Kingdom of the Spirit" is not a struggle in which evil is to be overcome, but the confrontation of the individual with the actual negation of separated particularity and the reality of the union of God and man.

The essential significance of life within the community is represented by the experience of worship. The cultic life, the worship (Cultus), of the community, as Hegel defines it, is an inward transforming experience. Worship is not to be understood, he insists, as mere outward acts, for such acts in themselves imperfectly suggest the experience of worship. In its true expression, worship is the experience of unity with the Absolute in the finite; it necessarily involves an inward change of finite spirit and feeling.[96] For Hegel, worship signifies in general "the eternal process of subject determining itself as identical with its essence."[97] The essential element in worship is this consciousness of concrete unity, the unity to which the whole life of the religious community bears witness. "Worship (Cultus) by its definition is the self negation of the empirical consciousness; man surrenders himself to the consciousness of the divine in him and his

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[96] Ibid., XV, 83.

[97] Ibid., p. 86.

unity with the divine."[98] Worship expresses both the negative and positive moments of the community of Spirit. In true worship, selfish sinful particularity is negated and the way is opened for the experience of perfected unity. The high moments of worship are moments of the realization of the unity of finite spirit with Absolute Spirit. The sacrifice of particularity and the determination by the consciousness of the Absolute are the two essential moments of community. Accord-

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[98] Ibid., XVI, 126. In a note on his discussion of Hegel's presentation of the idea of "The Return of finite spirit to God" in Hegels Lehre von Gott, Erik Schmidt notes that the doctrine of the "Cultus," as the last moment of religion, represents the final synthesis of the topic, a synthesis which proves again to be the basis for a new development--Absolute Idea. "Yet," he remarks, "we can say that he (Hegel) perhaps nowhere else came so near the gospel and at the same time, apart from all logical and dialectical elements of his system, succeeded in expressing so directly his own piety. . . . the conviction that only the giving up of self, the renunciation of finiteness and naturalness can lead us to community with God, brings Hegel not only close to Luther but also draws him close to Jesus. What Hegel says about the coordinate working of the grace of God and the activity of man in the community has been understood as somewhat synergistic, that is, that man must carry out one part and God the other in order for God and man to come together. But to the contrary, Hegel sees the act of God and man as a unit. It is God's Spirit itself which in the experience of worship binds the finite spirit with God. That the whole life of faith is assigned by Hegel to worship goes as far as the expression that only the sacrifice of the heart binds man to God. When Hegel finally, in all seriousness, compares philosophy to worship, he casts a holy light on the spirit of his philosophizing. Likewise, his objectiveness in thought, his loss of self in the object of knowledge, his renunciation of subjective threefold thought, consequently, his dialectic, speculative method, reveal here their religious foundation. In view of these statements, one can only regret that this logical system prevented Hegel thereby from more deeply establishing his doctrine and from more adequately formulating his own piety" (p. 243).

ingly, Christian worship, for Hegel, denotes the final moment of religious community--the experience of Spirit conscious of itself in unity with its other.[99]

b. Universal Community

The realization of ideal, universal community is contingent upon the extension of community beyond the bounds established in the religious consciousness. The religious community is definite, and the limits which inhere to this form of

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[99] The cultic practices of the Christian religion exhibit, according to Hegel, its nature as spiritual community. The practice of the baptism of infants displays the conviction that the child is born into the actualized community of the Spirit, that the natural sinful separation of man from God has been overcome in the community of Spirit, and that, by virtue of the fact of being born of parents within the community, the sinfulness of particular existence is implicitly overcome in the child. The condition of spiritual life, of participation in the community, for the child is the actualization of this implicit reality (Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 333). The sacrament of Holy Communion expresses, for Hegel, the experience of the presence of God. In a sensible, immediate manner the consciousness of reconciliation with God, the indwelling of the Spirit, is given to man (ibid., pp. 338-340). Hegel adopts the Lutheran position in regard to the sacrament of Holy Communion, which he interprets as beginning with an external ordinary object which is used to mediate the inner consciousness of the presence of God. The object in itself is nothing, but the object received in faith expresses the negation of the sensuous elements and the realization of spiritual union. He rejects the Roman Catholic position because of its close identification with externality. He rejects also a position which he identifies as that of the Reformed Church. In the latter interpretation, the fault lies in the insistence that the Sacrament is simply an act of remembrance in which Spirit is present merely as subjective, particular, immediate consciousness (ibid.).

community exclude the reconciliation of what Hegel calls "objectivity in general." The form of religious community fails to comprehend within itself: (1) the life of the world in general; (2) the theoretical negation of abstract thought; (3) the form of self-determining idea, the perfected community of Notion.[100] Only as Mind realizes itself as universal reality is Idea in community perfected. Anything other than the unified whole is the imperfection, abstraction, unfreedom of having objectivity as fact or idea separated for-itself. "Objectivity" is used by Hegel as a general term to designate the representation, or manifestation, in thought or existence, of any entity separated as independent. The universals of the categories of the understanding, taken as self-identical, are independent and abstract, and therefore, present objectivity in thought; correspondingly, any aspect of existence, taken as isolated from universal principle, is objectivity in existence. When the other as the world, as differentiation, as separation and distinction, is comprehended as being but a moment or aspect of the whole, then, and only then for Hegel, is completed, universal community--the unified whole of reality--actualized.

Man is in conscious communion with the Absolute in religion; real individuality, the determination of the particular by the universal, is expressed in the religious consciousness. "According to Christianity," Hegel writes, "the individual as

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[100] Ibid., pp. 340-341.

such has an infinite value as the object and aim of divine love, destined as mind to live in absolute relationship with God himself, and have God's mind dwelling in him: i.e. man is implicitly destined to supreme freedom."[101] The conviction of reconciliation is the consciousness of the joining of God and man, and it is, therefore, Spirit in community. For man to be aware of this is the realization of his essential being which underlies all appearances of isolated particularity. This being in community is not something that man acquires, but something that man realizes in his life, something that he is. It is the very actuality of man, the joining of his essence and existence.

This essential self-relation of Spirit in man is the pivot and center of the difference between antiquity and the modern world for Hegel.[102] In the development of community in the idea of the Christian religion, the Infinite and the finite are united. Man realizes the presence of God in his life, and, as expressed in the form of religious community, this is the joining of man as particular, and as particularity in general, to the Universal. But the life of the religious community has opposed to it the life of society, the world as a whole. Consequently, the full realization of community in the world waits on the reconciliation of society in general to the Absolute.

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[101] Philosophy of Mind, p. 101.

[102] Philosophy of Right, p. 84.

This community, according to Hegel, is to be established in accordance with the essential content of the religious community, but the religious community per se fails to include in its definite existence the whole of life. The religious community in life is an abstraction for Hegel, because this reconciled community has at the same time a developed worldliness over against it. The world, as related to both the individual and the church as a whole, appears as something separated from the experience of union.[103]

Universal community involves the reconciliation of the objectivity of the world and spiritual reality. In the course of its history, the Christian community has been conscious of the diremption of worldliness and has sought to overcome this separation of existential life from Ultimate Reality. One approach to the reunion took the form of the renunciation of the world through the disavowal of all earthly passions in asceticism and all earthly values in monasticism. This, however, does not represent an actual reconciliation, but an abstraction from the world. The Church in the Medieval period sought to achieve community through maintaining the two realms as distinct but not separated. The union of the two consists, according to this understanding, in the rule of the religious community over secular life. A relationship is established after this pattern, but it is a relationship without actual

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[103] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 341.

reconciliation. Historically, this development, Hegel charges, produced a situation in which the religious community brought into its life all manner of secular interests and corruption. This was possible because a fundamental contradiction existed within the spiritual community itself.

Hegel looks for the actual reconciliation of the world through the negation of the contradictory relationship between religious and secular life. The principle which actualizes the universal community in the world is morality, that is, the determination of the objectivity of the world according to universal Right. Secular life thus takes on the character of reconciled spiritual life, for the Universal and particular are joined in the world. In morality, Hegel writes, "worldliness is fashioned by notion (Begriff), Reason, Truth, eternal reality in accord with itself; it is the concrete realized freedom, the rational will."[104]

Mind Objective, according to Hegel's analysis, progresses in social ethics through various stages or degrees of the integration of universal moral will and existential will until it culminates in the state.[105] "The state," Hegel asserts,

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[104] Ibid., p. 343.

[105] As Hegel uses the term "state," it refers, not simply to the political organization, but to the complex unity of a particular people, the spirit of a people. The state is the center and foundation of "the concrete aspects of national life, of art, law, morality, religion, science" (Reason in History, p. 63). It is the individuality of a people; the

"is the self-conscious ethical substance."[106] It is in the state, then, that the Divine Mind is reconciled to the world.[107] The state is based on religion,[108] that is, its fundamental characteristic as Objective Mind is the reconciliation of the Infinite in the finite. The actual state is the union of life in the world and its concrete essence. The state as "the organization and actualisation of moral life"[109] is concrete community in positive existence. The life of the state is divine, not as opposed to secular life, but as the secular life determined by the universal principle. This is the absolute and perfect freedom in life, for even as the individual man, aware of the absolute relationship with God himself, is a free man,

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spirit of a people is the definite character which their total life exhibits. Concerning this character, Hegel writes that "its essence is represented, revered, and enjoyed as God in religion; presented as image and intuition, in art; apprehended cognitively and conceived as thought, in philosophy" (ibid., pp. 66-67). The highest point of the development of this spirit is reached when it becomes self-conscious: "The highest point of a people's development is the rational consciousness of its life and conditions, the scientific understanding of its laws, its system of justice, its morality. For in this unity (of subjective and objective) lies the most intimate unity in which spirit can be with itself. The purpose of its work is to have itself as object. But Spirit can have itself as object only by thinking itself" (ibid., p. 92). Thus the state actualizes self-conscious universality in the objectivity of the world.

[106] Philosophy of Mind, p. 131.

[107] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, pp. 343-344.

[108] Reason in History, p. 63.

[109] Philosophy of Mind, p. 156.

so also the perfect freedom of society is the universal consciousness determining, ordering existential society.

In this manner, the objectivity in general of the world is overcome. The world separated in its own life for-itself is negated in the realization of the absolute freedom for the state, the self-determination of the state by its essential and substantial reality. The state is thus not a means to an end but the end itself--the actual community of social life with the Absolute.

According to Hegel, "The history of the World is nothing but the development of the Idea of Freedom."[110] Hegel's concern with world history involves empirical fact only in so far as the historical is the scene of the realization of the Idea. The details of history illustrate the self-determined development of reason in history. The hypothesis with which he starts his analysis of world history, and the conclusion which he draws from his survey as completed, is "that Reason governs the world and has consequently governed its history."[111] This

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[110] Philosophy of History, p. 456.

[111] Reason in History, p. 31. The same thought is expressed in theology, Hegel notes, by the conviction that "the world is not abandoned to chance and external accident but controlled by Providence" (ibid., p. 14). "The truth that a Providence, that is to say, a divine Providence, presides over the events of the world corresponds to our principle; for divine Providence is wisdom endowed with infinite power which realizes its own aim, that is, the absolute, rational, final purpose of the world. Reason is Thought determining itself in absolute freedom" (ibid., p. 15).

affirmation has nothing to do with "empirical detail," for here chance occurrences, the multitude of weary details, seen in their particularity, seem to blur the progress of history. But history as the scene of the actualization of Reason is determined by its end, the absolute freedom of the Universal determining itself to particular consciousness. Freedom is the ultimate purpose toward which all history has continually aimed.[112] World history begins in a general aim to realize the Absolute Idea, that is, the Idea determining itself in its other, and Idea is realized in consciousness of absolute unity, the world Spirit "finding itself--coming to itself--and contemplating itself in concrete actuality."[113] Reason reaches its perfect expression in the moment of perfect freedom in which the essential character and existential fact coincide.[114]

The idea of freedom has been consummated in world history in the idea of the Protestant state. In this genuine idea of the state, the moral conscience is embodied in social life.

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[112] Ibid., p. 25.

[113] Ibid., p. 31.

[114] This is the basis for Hegel's insistence that the ultimate purpose is what is actually willed in the world itself, that reason governs history. This is the conviction, Hegel declares, to which philosophy should lead us, "that the actual world is as it ought to be, that the truly good, the universal divine Reason is the power capable of actualizing itself" (ibid., p. 47). He bases this assertion in part on the assumption that the Absolute as Absolute cannot be so powerless as to fail to realize its own end, and in part on the very character of his teleologically oriented system which is determined by the ultimate synthesis found in Absolute Knowledge, or the self-consciousness of Absolute Spirit.

This is the self-determined subjectivity, "the free spirit learning to see itself in its reasonableness and truth."[115] This is true, because, as Hegel views the spirit which determines the essential nature of the Protestant state, "the constitution and the code, as well as their several applications, embody the principle and development of the moral life, which proceeds and can only proceed from the truth of religion . . . ."[116] The truth recognized in the development of Protestantism, the truth which leads to the completed idea of the political life, is the union of the inward self-consciousness and the Universal Self-consciousness.

The course of world history is, for Hegel, "the process of development which the Idea has passed through in realizing itself--i.e. the Idea of Freedom whose reality is the consciousness of freedom . . . ." It is the course of "the realization of Spirit."[117] And in this realization in the course of world history, the objectivity of the world is reconciled as Spirit is realized in universal community.

A second form of objectivity in general which inhibits the realization of universal community is objectivity of thought in the form of the understanding. The realization of community in religion suggests the content but not the form of

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[115] Philosophy of Mind, p. 166.

[116] Ibid., p. 166.

[117] Philosophy of History, p. 457.

the union which leads to the dissolution of objectivity in thought. For Hegel the summit of human activity is thought; therefore, it is imperative for the actualization of universal community that objectivity in thought be transmuted. Understanding is that mode of the mind which rests in the distinction of concepts, the separation of idea in antithetical relation, in which concepts are isolated from one another in their self-identity. Mind functioning as understanding is controlled by the principle of identity and contradiction, and, accordingly, separates each concept from its opposite. This mode of thought prohibits the realization of Hegel's concrete community of Idea. That which is as definite is identical with itself. The antithetical concepts, for example, of subject and object, thought and being, man and God, by virtue of their essential differentiation are separated in themselves.

Mind functioning under the limitation imposed by the understanding comprehends only abstractions. The activity of Mind so conceived disallows the concrete, in general, the community of Absolute Idea, in its denial of the principle of the identity of opposites. It precludes the rational community of thought in its denial of the rational principle of unity in distinction. All concrete determined content of spiritual community is impossible as a result of the objectivity of abstract distinction in thought.[118]

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[118] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 345.

According to Hegel, the objectivity of self-identity takes two principal forms in thought. The first is the abstract objectivity expressed in the denial of the finite, and the affirmation of the absolute primacy of Substance. According to this manner of thought, the real is the substantial ultimate which is in-itself and is to be conceived through itself; it is essentially simple, radically other than the finite; it subsists in its self identity.[119] Such an understanding of reality does not admit the differentiation within the essential nature of the Absolute Reality; rather, the Ultimate is regarded as being simple, in-itself. Consequently, the conscious union in differentiation of Absolute and finite mind, the community of rational consciousness, is not possible. The only relation possible, according to Hegel, is that of abject servitude in the utter repudiation of finite in thought and being. The other form of the understanding which prohibits the universal community of idea is expressed by the denial of any possible noetic relation with the Ultimate and the advocacy of consciousness within the self. The abstract subjectivity of isolated self-consciousness is accepted as the limit of the reach of thought and experience. The possibility of community is thus repudiated and mind is regarded as the finite

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119. This mode of thought Hegel finds articulated in philosophy by Spinoza and in religion by Mohammedanism.

consciousness alone.[120] As expressed in religion and philosophy, this mode of thought is opposed to externality and differentiation, and consequently in Hegel's estimation, to rational concrete thought which involves the negative determination of the Absolute. Hegel asserts that the result of this second form of objectivity in thought is therefore "that everything is taken out of the subject without objectivity, without determination, without the development of God." The objectivity according to the mode of the understanding is in first form "the unfreedom of slavery of spirit"; the second form is "abstract subjectivity, subjective freedom without content."[121] Both forms disallow the possibility of ultimate freedom, the final reconciliation of mind in universal community, Reality in-and-for-itself, which is Mind conscious of itself in Mind.

Universal Reality is actualized for Hegel as the subject as mind articulates the content of notion (Begriff), the spiritual community of Idea, out of itself in accordance with the necessity of the self-determined development of Idea. In this articulation, subject and object are united in differentiation and union. This is the moment of philosophy in its final expression as Absolute Knowledge. Idea is the concrete Absolute

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[120] According to Hegel, this purely subjective standard is present in a religious form in pietism and a philosophical form in the philosophy of the Enlightenment, and particularly, the system of Kant.

[121] Ibid., p. 350.

in community, and only as such is it notion (Begriff), self-determining Idea, the Truth. "Then notion produces the truth--this is its subjective freedom--however, [mental activity of notion] recognizes this content as one [which is] at the same time not produced, but as the in-and-for-itself Being of Truth."[122] Notion thus expresses the perfected reality of community: the community which is concrete by virtue of its determination in an other; the community which is absolutely free because it is absolutely self-determined; the community which is absolutely necessary as determined by its essential being in-and-for-itself; the community which is, accordingly, essentially the Real and the True. This community is the reconciliation of universal and particular mind, the essential community of Mind conscious of itself in Absolute Knowledge.

The community expressed in the religious consciousness represents the universal community; however, because of the form of its expression and because of the sense of an objectivity opposed to itself, this community falls short of the perfect expression of universal community. It represents the essential content of true community in the only form mankind in general can receive it, and, accordingly, for the multitude of men reconciliation is accepted and relationship established as it is authoritatively given and actually experienced in the religious community. Philosophy expresses, in contrast to the

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[122] Ibid., p. 351.

form of religious community, the perfected content of universal community in its true form. Hegel maintains that "the purpose of philosophy is to know God"[123] and by this statement he expresses his conviction that philosophy comprehends the essential community of Idea, the Absolute knowledge as concrete, as spiritual, as real Universality. This knowledge is the content of the absolute reconciliation of Universal and particular, of Infinite and finite mind, in a perfect universal community. In its comprehension of Notion, philosophy, Hegel writes, "is knowledge of pure knowledge, not in the sense of an abstract essence such as duty is, but in the sense of an essential being which _is_ _this_ knowledge, this individual pure self-consciousness which is therefore at the same time a genuine _object_; for this notion is the self-existing self."[124] This is the union of Absolute Knowledge, the ultimate community of self-consciousness: "The nature, moments, and process of this knowledge have then shown themselves to be such that this knowledge is pure self-existence of self-consciousness."[125]

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[123] _Ibid_., p. 352.

[124] _The_ _Phenomenology_, p. 795.

[125] _Ibid_., p. 798.

PART THREE

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Werke, Bd. XVI, Philosophie der Reli[illegible]

Chapter VI

CHRISTIANITY AND HEGELIANISM

There can be little doubt that the intention of Hegel was to defend religion and, in defending it, to articulate, by the reconciliation of reason and religion, the true content which he believed to be present in the form of religion. Only thus could the meaning of religion, expressed in a more perfect idiom, be fully comprehended. In the concluding paragraph of his Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Hegel declared his aim was "to reconcile reason with religion, to know religion in its manifold forms as necessary, and to recover the Truth and the Idea within revealed religion."[1] The reconciliation is accomplished by the rational comprehension of the

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[1] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 355.

essential content of religion. This is possible because religion is seen to express in its own form the content of Absolute Idea, and the review of the history of positive religions exhibits the creative wisdom of a dialectical process culminating in the Absolute Religion. Religion in its final moment is the Truth, the self-consciousness of the Absolute Spirit, God as man and man as God.

Hegel was convinced in his own mind that his system represented the rational vindication of Christianity, and he, therefore, willingly accepted the role of a defender of Christianity from perversions within and attacks from without. Emphatically rejecting the view that philosophy should avoid the discussion of religious truths, Hegel insisted that the fact was that "in recent times philosophy has had to take over the defense of religious truths . . . ."[2] The time had come to move forward, and consequently the defense, as directed by Hegel, was a forceful attack. The thinking spirit, he asserts, "must now advance to the intellectual comprehension of that which originally was present only to the feeling and imagining spirit."[3]

The standpoint of the age, Hegel charged, was the assumption that the consciousness of the subject is the absolute

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[2] Reason in History, p. 16.

[3] Ibid., p. 17.

moment in knowledge and religion.[4] The role of "feeling" provided the dominant motif in religion. Hegel accepted the contribution of this religion of subjectivity, articulated as a system by Schleiermacher and expressed in the popular religion of the day by pietism, and insisted that it represented valid but partial expression of the truth of religion. It expressed the priority of the consciousness of the subject in religion, but in the limited perspective of this understanding of religion as mere subjectivity, it surrendered the content of religion.[5] The result was a religion without thought, without content, a religion of the conviction of the heart, a religion which was essentially incomplete and therefore necessarily false.[6] The philosophical expression of the standpoint of the age, found in the writings of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, systematized the understanding of the consciousness of the subject as the absolute moment in knowledge. This also was unacceptable to Hegel.[7] For Hegel, this perspective, as expressed in religion and in philosophy, represented a complete antithetical contrast with the true, concrete, rational wholeness, for in the standpoint of subjectivity, the individual as

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[4] _Werke_, bd. XVI, _Philosophie der Religion_, p. 194.

[5] _Philosophy of Mind_, p. 184.

[6] Cf. above, ch. II, pp. 56-64.

[7] Cf. above, ch. I, pp. 30-47.

such stood as an abstraction, alone and isolated in thought and faith.

By contrast, the Christian religion, Hegel insisted, proclaims that God has revealed himself, that here man is to come to a rational understanding of God. The possibility of knowing God, of knowing what he is in truth, imposes upon men the obligation to know him.[8] Religion without knowledge is an abstraction and contradicts, Hegel was convinced, the basic Christian witness that God has revealed himself in man. No longer is the Absolute to be regarded as inaccessible to man. Philosophy and religion are one in the recognition that the Infinite is manifest in the finite, that the Absolute Spirit is found in the consciousness of man. All that God is, he imparts and reveals.[9] This, the supreme self-confidence of reason, the conviction that reason is not shut up in the subject, but is one with reality, is given comprehensive expression in Hegel's system of absolute idealism.

1. Absolute Religion

That Hegel viewed the Christian religion as the fulfillment of the essence of religion is shown, not merely by his repeated direct evaluation that it is the absolute and perfect

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[8] Reason in History, p. 16.

[9] The Logic, p. 254.

religion,[10] but by aspects of his thought which attest to his acceptance of its preeminence. The conscious attempt to perfect a Christian philosophy is reflected in his practice of associating Christian doctrines with various aspects of his system. For example, the incarnation in human form of the divine being, although expressed in an imperfect manner in the Christian religion, suggests, according to Hegel, the content of Absolute Knowledge, the Spirit knowing itself as Spirit, the pure self-existence of absolute self-consciousness. Hegel's vocabulary itself, for example, his use of the word "Geist," can be interpreted as suggesting the basic involvement of his system in religion. The purport of even the most abstruse topic, the analysis of pure idea, is represented as a study of God in himself and, more specifically, as a rational statement of the essentials of the doctrine of the trinity. In the presentation of the system as a whole in The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, there is the clear intimation that what is dealt with in The Logic is the very being of God, that the Philosophy of Nature is the analysis of the other, the creation, the objectification of Idea, and that in the Philosophy of Mind, the reconciliation of Universality and particularity, or God and Man, is the real subject. From the perspective of comparative religion, the distinct manner in which Hegel deals with the Christian religion indicates his evalua-

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[10] Cf. above, ch. II, pp. 90-92.

tion. The religions he regards as limited, imperfect expressions of religion, are subjected to critical analysis in terms of the contribution of this particular moment in the development of religious consciousness and of the specific inadequacies of this or that expression of religion. By contrast, Hegel's presentation of the Christian religion takes the form, basically, of an analysis of its nature as the essence of religion, as a religion, therefore, which illustrates the Truth of Absolute Idea. It is his judgment that what is to be found in the Christian religion is religion itself, the perfected moment of the full content of religion.[11] Christianity, consequently, is not merely _a moment_ of Spirit, but _the moment_ in which Absolute Spirit is expressed according to the forms of the religious consciousness.

A question may be raised as to why Hegel chose to identify his position with the Christian religion. It is a legitimate question, for certainly his system, as Hegel clearly recognized and as the preceding chapters of this study illustrate, involved, at the very least, a thorough reinterpretation of Christian doctrine. It is equally clear that Hegel had no abiding concern to defend, or even examine seriously, the historical reference of the Christian faith to the life and character of Jesus of Nazareth. Furthermore, Hegel does not hesitate to suggest that the Christian religion is to be judged by

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[11] _Werke_, bd. XVI, _Philosophie der Religion_, pp. 193-194.

a higher standard, and that the judgment which results is that this religion is an imperfect and subordinate expression of the Absolute as exhibited by speculative philosophy.

The answer lies in Hegel's considered opinion that "the result of free thought coincides with the content of the Christian religion, that this is the revelation of reason."[12] But the way this is phrased is misleading. The rational system of free, self-determined thought is not accepted by Hegel because it can be harmonized with religion; rather, religion is accepted because religion, freed from its figurative expressions such as creation, Father and Son, etc., can be interpreted in terms of the Idea. Christianity is thus accepted as absolute and perfect religion because its content coincides with reason, that is, Christianity pictures, in the forms of it doctrinal statements and its historical references, the content of Absolute Knowledge. And the real content of the central Christian doctrines of God, the incarnation, reconciliation, are found to be one with the content and process of the true philosophical system--Hegel's philosophy.

The question which came first in Hegel's intellectual development--the content of the Christian religion or the system of the free-self-determined idea--cannot be finally resolved. The chronological study of his writings does not provide conclusive evidence but it does suggest the influence of Hegel's

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[12] Werke, bd. VIII, System der Philosophie, p. 113.

understanding of the Christian message of the incarnation and the reconciliation of God and man.[13] But in the mature expression of Hegel's thought the system itself is determinative. Hegel's analysis of the Christian religion itself indicates his preference for the philosophical position. The principle of necessity is brought to bear on content of religion, so that the activity of God in creation, the fall of man, the moment of reconciliation, are interpreted in terms of the necessity inherent within dialectical determination, the necessity integral to Hegel's logical system. Creation thus becomes the necessary self-determination of Absolute Universality in its own other--particularity. Sin represents the actualization of the antithesis, and, viewed in terms of the dialectic, is the necessary expression of God's self-determination. The incarnation is the reality of reconciliation. That which the incarnation conveys is the ultimate synthesis, the union of universality with particularity. Only in negation of the negative moment of particularity is the final positive moment, the perfected moment of the whole, realized. The Absolute, God is only fully the Absolute moment as the result of a determined dialectical process. In this manner the principle of necessity transforms the content of Christian doctrine in Hegel's interpretation.

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13. Cf. above, ch. I, pp. 3-21.

But the genius of Christianity, traced in two ways, reveals Christianity as the Absolute Religion: (1) historically, or better, developmentally, the Christian religion is the culmination of a process leading from the religion of nature (abstract substantiality excluding all finite particularity), through the religion of spiritual individuality (abstract subjectivity excluding all objective reference), to the absolute religion (concrete union of substantiality and individuality);[14] (2) ideologically, the Christian religion is the realized notion of religion,[15] an expression of the Truth, the coincidence of subject and object. The latter approach to the genius of the Christian religion is the primary declaration of the nature of the Absolute in Hegel's system; history is nothing more than the scene of realization of the idea in the consciousness.

The developmental pattern which pervades Hegel's thought involves a criterion by which more complete grades are distinguished from the less complete. This is manifested, for example, in Hegel's analysis of the _Phenomenology of Mind_. Here he distinguishes the various forms of experience as to degree of completeness. The standard by which the various levels of experience are separated is the degree of conscious interpenetration of the subject and object in experience.

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[14] Cf. above, ch. II, pp. 67-80.

[15] _Werke_, bd. XVI, _Philosophie der Religion_, p. 191.

Sense experience, the lowest form, is the moment of the least interpenetration, for the subject finds its object as something over against itself; absolute knowledge, the highest form of the phenomenon of mind, unites subject and object in a complete unity so that the object is nothing other than the consciousness of the Mind realizing itself as "individual pure self-consciousness which is therefore at the same time a genuine object; for this notion is the self-existing self."[16] This pure self-existence of self-consciousness is the perfect unity of subject and object, and is, accordingly, the absolute moment of experience, the moment in which there is a perfect interpenetration of subject and object.

When this criterion is applied to religion, Christianity is adjudged by Hegel to be the complete and perfect religion, the absolute religion, because it represents the idea of the perfect unity of subject and object--God is incarnate in man, man is made one with God. Christianity is the religion in which Spirit has itself become object for itself. "In it the universal and the individual spirit, the infinite and the finite are inseparable; their absolute identity is this religion and the same as its content."[17]

The content of the Christian religion is thus, in the judgment of Hegel, a deficient way of expressing the absolute

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[16] Phenomenology, p. 795.

[17] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, pp. 193-194.

monism of idea, according to which, there is no distinction between thought and reality. Although incomplete in its particularity, finite mind is potentially one with Absolute Mind. The explicit realization of this potentiality is the self-consciousness of Absolute Mind. The Christian religion, paralleling the absolute moment of Idea, is the self-conscious existence of God in man. Man is not separated from God, but exists in essential continuity with God. The absolute moment of religion, perfectly expressed in the Christian religion for Hegel, is the actualization of this consciousness of unity.

Discussing the self-determined, self-determination of pure idea in The Logic, Hegel analyzes the process of the development of idea as one by which what is already implicitly present is made explicit:

> The onward movement of the notion is no longer either a transition into, or a reflection on something else, but Development. For in the notion, the elements distinguished are without more ado at the same time declared to be identical with one another and with the whole, and the specific character of each is a free being of the whole notion.[18]

To illustrate his point he uses the figure of a seed and a plant. A plant is developed from a seed; a seed involves potentially all that is later present in a plant. What is realized is not distinct but the natural outgrowth of the seed.

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[18] The Logic, pp. 288-289.

Self-contained development is essential to the dialectical process. Since the whole of reality exhibits a pattern of dialectical development, history, no less than logic, is movement by self-contained development. As the end of a process of development, Christianity, accordingly, is the highest moment, the Absolute religion, but as such, it is not separated as absolutely unique but represents in history the self-unfolding development of the idea of religion

Hegel's understanding of history will not admit the category of uniqueness. History is the pattern of the self-determining determination of notion. The process in the positive religions is the development from religious consciousness depicted as substance to religious consciousness depicted in terms of incarnation. Thus Christianity, while it is the absolute religion, under the guise of this interpretation of history, is not the unique revelation of God to man but the explicit fulfillment of a process of development. In fact, there is nothing really unique, for Hegel, in the Christian religion; it is simply the making explicit of what was already implicit in the most primitive forms of religion.

Finally, for an accurate evaluation of Hegelian thought, the Christian religion as the absolute religion must be placed in its proper context in the system. Christianity is absolute religion but it is not absolute truth, for in its nature as religion it is an imperfect expression, a limited, inadequate form for the delineation of absolute knowledge. Christianity

is absolute as religion, and therefore, expresses the truth as perfectly as it can be expressed under the limitations of religion. The absolute moment of truth is not the Christian religion, although Christianity is the nearest approximation to the truth in the imperfect form of religion. The reconciliation of reason and religion is thus accomplished by reason judging and advancing beyond the limitations of the religious consciousness. Hegelianism maintains, as John McTaggart recognized in his Studies in Hegelian Cosmology, a double relation to Christianity. Hegelianism defends Christianity and yet is also a most dangerous antagonist, "an antagonist all the more deadly because it works not by denial but by completion."[19]

2. Form and Content

The fulfillment of the content of the Christian religion, according to the Hegelian view, demands the transformation of its imperfect expression of identity into the perfect form of identity in difference--"the self-thinking Idea, the truth aware of itself,--the logical system."[20] Philosophy completes religion by liberating it from the inadequacies of its forms and by elevating them to the union of absolute content and

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[19] Studies in Hegelian Cosmology, pp. 250-251.

[20] The Philosophy of Mind, p. 196.

form; this is the form which, according to Hegel, "determines itself to content, remains identical with it, and is in that the cognition of that essential and actual necessity."[21] From the comprehensive view of philosophy, the content of philosophy and religion are seen to be identical but, while they have the same content, philosophy is preëminent as the logical system, the self-thinking idea.

The final moment of the Hegelian system is that in which absolute form and absolute content are one. Philosophy is, in a curious phrase of Hegel, this "absolute-Absolute," that is, "the Absolute which in its form has returned to itself, or that whose form is equal to its content."[22] This designation of the Absolute is an expression of the general perspective of the Hegelian system that the content of cognition belongs to the method. There is nothing in the system of Idea which is not implicit in the content of the dialectical method itself. Thus Hegel can assert, "the method itself is extended into a *system*."[23]

In his explication of religion, Hegel always sought to reconcile reason with religion. This meant giving a scientific, a systematic rational, character to the content of religion. This was possible because the essential content of the rational

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[21] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

[22] *Science of Logic*, II, 164.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 480.

system was already present implicitly in the form of religion. Hegel was convinced that thought harmonizes with the Christian religion, for this religion is the imperfect revelation of reason.[24] Therefore, for Hegel "Genuine theology is at the same time a real philosophy of religion."[25]

Religion prefigures the Idea. The movement from religion to philosophy, accordingly, does not involve the assumption of a new content, but the exhibition of the true content concealed by religious forms. What Hegel did not specifically say, but what may be concluded from his analysis of the relationship between philosophy and religion, is that the content of religion is better expressed by speculative thought. Indeed, religion only as comprehended by philosophy can say what is acceptable to speculative thought. This rational philosophy of religion, far from receiving the content of religion, determines the content for itself. The consequence of Hegel's position was expressed with unmistakable clarity by one of Hegel's students, Ludwig Feuerbach, when in the "Preface" to The Essence of Christianity (1841) Feuerbach wrote: "Speculation makes religion say only what it has *itself* thought, and expressed far better than religion; it assigns a meaning to religion without any reference to the *actual* meaning of

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[24] *Werke*, bd. VIII, *System der Philosophie*, p. 113.

[25] *The Logic*, p. 73.

religion; it does not look beyond itself."[26]

What is needed, then, to complete religion is absolute form for the absolute content. This leads Hegel to attempt the transformation of the forms of the religious consciousness--the picture thinking, the imaginative, historical reference of Christian faith--into Idea. Consequently, the believer must advance to the intellectual comprehension of what is present only as heartfelt feeling in the immediate consciousness of religion; and, finally, the consciousness of faith, which involves essentially an immediateness of relation and an objective reference, must be translated into rational, self-determined content.

The time was ripe for this transformation, Hegel assumes, because philosophy in the system of Idea in-and-for-itself had come to its full development. It follows that the absolute content, first brought to consciousness by the revelation of the Christian religion, could be grasped by the modern thinker in a degree of completeness which was not possible for the early Christian believers. Therefore, it was not by reference to the early Christian witness that Hegel defends the Absolute content of the Christian religion, but by the development of the unfolding rational intelligence of man. The final consummation of universal consciousness is depicted in the content

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[26] Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, trans. George Eliot (New York, 1957), pp. xxxv-xxxvi.

of Christian religion, but it lacks what Hegel believed could now be supplied--a form of consciousness presenting the reconciliation of God and man freed from all reference to sensuous imagery and subjective experience.

The Christian religion is truth. It is a religion of spiritual union, for here Spirit is the infinite self-revealed in self-conscious being, here Spirit is actualized by the completed process of estrangement into objective consciousness and return into self-conscious union. The essential significance of religion, for Hegel, as stated repeatedly in this study, is "the knowledge of divine Spirit concerning itself through the mediation of finite spirit."[27] In its final moment, religion is "the self-consciousness of Absolute Spirit."[28] The Christian religion is this absolute moment--"the Spirit of God or God as actual true Spirit--God dwelling in his community."[29]

As expressed in the conviction of the heart, this community is pure consciousness, direct immediate awareness of being reconciled to God. Faith is the consciousness of essential reality which acquires content. It involves, therefore, conceptual thought. The primary character in the development of faith is this content, but, by the very nature of faith, this is a qualified content. Faith is an immediateness of subjective conviction which sets forth its content in imaginative rather

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[27] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, p. 216.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid., XVI, 315.

than rational forms of conceptualization. Analyzing the nature of belief as distinct from pure insight, Hegel asserts that belief has content, while pure insight, by contrast, has no genuine intelligible content. However, this content of faith, when compared with rational, self-contained thought, is seen to be imperfect because of this limited form of imaginative idea:

> This immediateness, however, so far as thinking enters consciousness, or pure consciousness enters into self-consciousness, acquires the significance of an objective being that lies beyond consciousness of self. It is because of the significance which immediacy and simplicity of pure thought thus acquire in consciousness that the essential reality, the object of belief, drops into being as imaginatively present Idea (Vorstellung), instead of being the content of thought, and comes to be looked at as a supersensible world, which is essentially an 'other' than self-consciousness.[30]

This form is "imaginatively presented" in that it uses matter from objective sources; it has a sensuous reference in terms of actual events and person. It is not the form of rational thought because its ideas are simple and unrelated; they are asserted rather than necessarily connected. There is a genuine realization of community in religion but it is represented in terms of an act of God, not as the self-determination of Absolute Self-Consciousness.

The crux of the issue between content and form is this practice of faith of expressing essential reality in terms of

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30. The Phenomenology, p. 553.

"imaginatively presented idea (Vorstellung)." It is this that disqualifies religion for the absolute union of content and form. Its content expresses essential reality, while the nature of its form denies the content. It represents the Absolute as being something "'other' than self-consciousness." The content of this imaginative presentation is Absolute Spirit, and all that remains is to transcend this form by the development of the form in Absolute Knowledge in which the actual self-consciousness becomes the object it is aware of.[31] What, in religion, is represented in pictorial, imaginative presentation, is, in absolute knowledge, the conscious action of the self as Mind, Mind knowing itself as Absolute Mind.

The fundamental task of philosophy in relation to religion is to transform the conceptual form of faith, Vorstellung, into the notional form, Begriff, the comprehensive Idea, in which the manifold of essence and existence are grasped in unity. The characteristic of Vorstellung in general is finitude; it is an abstract, limited expression of the Absolute. Begriff, by contrast, is the infinite, the concrete, self-determined expression of the Absolute. The essential significance of Begriff is to be infinite, to be without limit by anything other than, or outside of, itself. Vorstellung refers to an "other," to something outside of itself. In the Notion, thinking the object does not subsist as something absolutely separated from

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[31] Ibid., p. 789.

the subject. There is, therefore, no disparity in the absolute moment of reconciliation between the content and form; rather there is expressed in the content and form of Begriff the perfected community of the Self-Consciousness of Absolute Mind.

Where this activity of transforming imaginatively presented idea into rational notion acquires crucial significance is in Hegel's understanding of the relation of the Christian religion to Jesus Christ, and, by implication, the revelation and reconciliation of God in Jesus Christ. It is Hegel's judgment that the Christian religion relates itself to external attestation, and thus expresses its understanding of reconciliation by picturing the union of God and man in a particular individual, Jesus of Nazareth. This form of expression lacks two basic aspects of the rational notion--universality and necessity. The reconciliation, while it may be pictured by the figure of Christ, is not objective person but the all pervading principle of reality. Faith views the incarnation as an event in the objective history of the world, and faith witnesses to what it believes to be the gracious act of God in the incarnation and in the hearts of believers. But, Hegel insists, the incarnation is not a "happening"; it is not an act of God in the sense of a particular historical contingency; rather, the incarnation is a logical necessity; it is the real existence of Spirit alienating itself from itself and at the same moment eternally returning to itself. The incarnation is

an act only in the sense that it is the moment of Absolute Knowledge coming to consciousness in man.

The intelligent comprehension of faith transforms the imaginative idea of the incarnation into universal, necessary notion. Revelation as external history and as subjective consciousness is no longer sensible, contingent, particular in reference, but is the highest moment of the consciousness of reality. The true content of the Christian religion, Hegel insists, is not that this particular individual, Jesus of Nazareth, was the Son of God;[32] rather, it is the idea of the incarnation realized in this individual, the idea of the self-consciousness of the Absolute in finite consciousness.

Was this particular individual, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, the Christ? Hegel answers this question, a question that he himself raised, by affirming that Jesus was the Son of God. Hegel accepts the uniqueness of the moment, but he repudiates the uniqueness of this moment, this man, Jesus Christ. The self-movement of Truth is perfected in the moment in which God and man are joined. Thus the truth is found in an event; it happens!

Karl Barth, a twentieth-century spokesman of the absolute priority of the act of God in religious knowledge, sees, even while condemning the pattern of necessity in Hegel's thought, an indication of the true content of Christian revelation in

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[32] Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 318.

Hegel's insistence upon God revealing himself in a man. Theology, Barth remarks, is reminded by Hegel "of the possibility that Truth might be history, event; that it might always be recognized and discovered in actuality and not otherwise."[33] But the issue of Hegel's interpretation of the Christian religion comes to focus in the fact that the validity of Christian truth, for Hegel, is decidedly not dependent upon this particular event. The consciousness of union with God is Absolute Truth, and it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Truth is an actuality, an event, in that it is realized, the essential reality come to actual consciousness, in this man. But as Truth it not only is but must be repeatable in the consciousness of other men. Truth is thus a living consciousness, the actualization of the essential character of Reality.

What continuing value can the faith image of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ have? Basically, Hegel's point is that Jesus is the revelation and reconciliation of God not as event but as a moment of the fulfillment of rational consciousness. The imaginatively presented idea has value, and is to be retained, as an aid to the philosophically unsophisticated. In the rarified content of rational communion with Idea, the figure of the Christ may be a convenient form of illustrating absolute reconciliation, but here rational comprehension, the Notion, supersedes the imaginatively presented idea. The form

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[33] Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl, p. 299.

of representation which sees the reconciliation as the union of God and man in outward existence is helpful only for those who are not able to attain the standpoint of speculative thought.

Hegel's conviction that the progress of human consciousness moves by determined internal development from simple awareness to the identity of thought and reality in Absolute Knowledge, a thesis he sought to prove in his detailed study of _The Phenomenology of Mind_, is the primary factor in his interpretation of Christian religion. In the Christian religion it is proclaimed that God is revealed as man and man is revealed as God. God, as the Hegelian Absolute Spirit, is the content and process of the whole. The Absolute is both process and result, for it is Spirit differentiating itself from itself in its own other and being reconciled to itself in self-conscious union. Not until the final moment is God actualized as the Absolute. Ultimately, therefore, God may be regarded in Hegel's system as the result of rational thought. Philosophy, Hegel declares, represents "that Absolute in its activity, in its manifestation, and in this manner the Absolute becomes for itself [is actualized] in Spirit; _God is thus the result of philosophy_ . . . not merely the result, but eternally manifests himself, and is this manifestation."[34] The

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[34] _Werke_, bd. XV, _Philosophie der Religion_, p. 43 (italics mine).

"spiritual essentiality" of the unity of divine and human nature, suggested by the figure of the Christ, is the potential being of man as mind, and, in the realization of this potentiality, is found the actualization of the essential nature of man as Absolute Mind and, since this is absolute final moment, the essential nature of the Absolute itself.

> Divine and human nature in one is a harsher and more difficult expression; [more difficult, that is, than Absolute Idea] but, abandoning the imaginative form of presentation, it is the spiritual essentiality which is thereby conceptualized. In the unity of divine and human nature everything is to disappear which belongs to external particularization; the finite is to disappear.
>
> It is the substantiality of the unity of divine and human nature which comes by man to self-conscious being, so that man appears as God and God appears as man. This substantial unity is the potentiality (Ansich) of man.[35]

Herewith, Hegel's evaluation of the content and form of the Christian religion becomes evident. The content and form can be reconciled in Idea, for the revelation and reconciliation of God in Christ admits of the possibility of transposition into the Idea of Absolute Knowledge. This Absolute Knowledge is the self-determined final moment of the phenomenology of human consciousness, the moment in which the finite and the Infinite Mind is joined in consciousness.

Feuerbach, in the generation immediately following Hegel, developed this theme to its ultimate conclusion when he declared that theology is nothing more than anthropology, the

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[35] Ibid., XVI, 283.

view that the Ultimate is man himself in the perfection of self-contained consciousness.[36] The union accomplished in the religious consciousness is simply the consciousness of the species; Christ is the fulfillment of the consciousness of mankind. "Christ, as the consciousness of love," Feuerbach wrote in The Essence of Christianity, "is the consciousness of the species. We are all one in Christ. Christ is the consciousness of our identity. He therefore who loves man for the sake of man, who rises to the love of the species, to universal love, adequate to the nature of the species, he is a Christian, is Christ himself. He does what Christ did, what made Christ Christ."[37] The Idea of Absolute Knowledge becomes in Feuerbach's analysis of Christianity, "the idea of humanity as a whole," and, while different in content, the suggestion that Christ is a way of representing the perfecting of human consciousness is essentially the conclusion of Hegel's evaluation of Christianity. Feuerbach, following Hegel, accepted Christianity as the absolute religion, because in Christianity he found the expressed final moment of human consciousness:

> Only in Christ is the last wish of religion realised, the mystery of religious feeling solved;--solved however in the language of imagery proper to religion, for what God is in essence,

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[36] Feuerbach differed radically, however, from the content of Hegelian philosophy when he added to the thesis that theology is anthropology the additional element that anthropology is essentially physiology.

[37] The Essence of Christianity, p. 269.

> that Christ is in actual appearance. So far the Christian religion may justly be called the absolute religion. That God, who is himself nothing else than the nature of man, should have a real existence as such, should be man as object to the consciousness--this is the goal of religion; and this the Christian religion has attained in the incarnation of God."[38]

Hegel's attempt to transform what he adjudged to be the imperfect form of the Christian religion into a perfect representation of the content merged content and form. The content Hegel finds in Christianity is Absolute Knowledge, the self-thinking Idea; the form was thus to become the Truth aware of itself in the logical system. The result is, the Christian religion has the value of Idea, and theology, as the scientific representation of the Christian religion, presents a system of objective truth.

The religious consciousness is considered by Hegel to be a form of knowledge, an interpenetration of subject and object. In the systematization of its "spiritual fulness," the Christian faith is, therefore, "a copious body of objective truth, a system of knowledge and doctrine . . . ."[39] Religion, in its proper place in Hegel's encyclopaedic survey of the philosophical sciences, is an incomplete form of absolute knowledge.

The varied response in the nineteenth-century thought to the Hegelian interpretation of the genius of Christianity as Absolute Idea reveals the import of this analysis of content

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[38] Ibid., p. 145.

[39] The Logic, p. 125.

and form. Apart from the development in Feuerbach,[40] there was little new or creative in positive teaching of the theologians who followed Hegel. But the spokesmen of the Hegelian school did undertake the reformation of the whole of Christian theology by replacing Vorstellung with Begriff. The negative response, in particular Kierkegaard's rejection of this approach to Christianity, was, by contrast, a productive and distinct development and, in its statement, exposed some of the fundamental problems involved in the attempt to reconcile reason and religion in a system of speculative thought.

For some nineteenth-century theologians, Hegelianism represented the rational establishment of the Christian religion. Among the apologists for Hegelian Christianity, three Continental thinkers, David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874), Isaak August Dorner (1809-1884), Alois Emanuel Biedermann (1819-1885), and the British theologian, John Caird (1820-1898) continued the task of translating Christianity into idea content. They represent varying degrees of the acceptance of Hegelianism, but they are one in interpreting the content of the Christian religion in a new form, and the thought of each in turn presupposes the results of the Hegelian approach to Christianity.

In his Life of Jesus (1835), Strauss challenged the historicity of the references to Jesus in the New Testament.

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[40] Cf. above, ch. VI, pp. 282-284.

Strauss insisted that the Gospel narratives, whatever may have been the character of the man Jesus, are myths, constructs woven by faith around its essential idea content. The origin of Christianity, he argued, is the Idea and not the person of Jesus, and the Idea, as Strauss interprets it is essentially the unity of the divine and human nature.

Dorner's System of Christian Doctrine (1880-1881), while maintaining a distinction between Hegelian dialectical idealism and the monistic rationalism of pure thought, seeks to join idealism and Christian faith. Dorner introduced what he termed his "Encyclopaedic Position," by stating that faith issues in knowledge as well as life, for "faith desires to advance to the apprehension of objective truth."[41] This apprehension involves religious experience, but in mature religion, the immediacy of faith becomes known as rational truth. When he applies this understanding to Christology, Dorner writes--"as far as Christology is concerned, that union of divine and human, of which Christ is the principle, is the fundamental idea of Christianity."[42]

The very title of John Caird's principal study of Christian doctrine, The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity,[43]

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[41] I. A. Dorner, A System of Christian Doctrine, trans. Alfred Cave and J. S. Banks (Edinburgh, 1897), I, 21.

[42] Ibid., p. 28 (italics mine).

[43] John Caird, The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity, 2 vols. (Glasgow, 1904).

indicates his acceptance of the Hegelian enterprise. The work as a whole is a lucid exposition of a distinctly Hegelian understanding of Christianity as the idea of the reconciliation of divine and human natures. Biedermann's Christliche Dogmatik (1884-1885), H. R. Mackintosh suggests,[44] represents the most thorough attempt of a representative of the Hegelian school to transpose the whole of the Christian revelation into speculative thought. Biedermann draws upon Biblical data and the history of dogma in his presentation, but the culmination of the system is the transposing of doctrine into speculative categories. Seeking to free Christian dogma from all historical and personal reference, Biedermann presents a system of dogmatics abstract in the extreme. The personality of God is replaced by a "spiritual" concept of God as "Being-in-self"; a careful distinction is maintained in the dogmatics between the person of Christ and "the principle of redemption." Traditional forms of theology, Biedermann charged, have tended to confuse the two. If Christianity is indeed the absolute religion, then, Biedermann insists, the principle of redemption, the idea of God-manhood, must not be associated with the particularity of Jesus. To find its true value, the principle of redemption must be articulated as the necessary content of genuine speculative thought.

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[44] Types of Modern Theology, pp. 130 ff.

The most outspoken nineteenth-century critic of the Hegelian interpretation of Christianity, and the thinker who most accurately grasped the results of the system for the Christian religion, is the Danish writer, Sõren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). With deliberate intent, Kierkegaard used every device at his command--passion, ridicule, scorn, cogent argumentation--to refute and destroy the image of Christianity created by Hegel. Kierkegaard undertook the vocation of authorship with a sense of religious calling to bear witness to the violated "existential" meaning of Christianity. The issue in regard to Christianity, as Kierkegaard saw it, is not whether speculative philosophy is right or wrong; rather, the question is how this speculative transformation of Christianity is related to what it purports to explain. Kierkegaard's answer is that speculative thought, in the very nature of the activity of transforming the form of religious expression into objective idea, transmutes Christianity. Existence, Kierkegaard argued, cannot be contained by thought; and truth for man must be found in the passion of inwardness:

> Speculative philosophy is objective, and objectively there is no truth for existing individuals, but only approximations; for the existing individual is precluded from becoming altogether objective by the fact that he exists. Christianity on the contrary is subjective; the inwardness of faith in the believer constitutes the truth's eternal decision. And objectively there is no truth; for an objective knowledge of the truth of Christianity, or of its truths, is precisely untruth.

> To know a confession of faith by rote is paganism, because Christianity is inwardness.[45]

Kierkegaard scorns speculative reinterpretations of the Christian religion. Whatever may be the content of this activity, he insists that it is certainly not Christianity. In addition, the comprehension of this knowledge has absolutely nothing to do with the crucial matter of becoming a Christian. With characteristic biting wit, Kierkegaard writes of the philosopher speculating over faith:

> Over what faith does he speculate? Is it over the faith that he has, and especially over whether he has it or not? Ah, no, such a subject is too trifling for an objective speculative philosopher. What he speculates about is the objective faith. The objective faith, what does that mean? It means the sum of doctrinal propositions . . . . The objective faith--it is as if Christianity also had been promulgated as a little system, if not quite so good as the Hegelian; it is as if Christ--aye, I speak without offense--it is as if Christ were a professor, and as if the Apostles had formed a little scientific society. . . . the speculative philosopher is perhaps the farthest possible remove from Christianity, and it is perhaps preferable to be an offended individual who nevertheless sustains a relation to Christianity than a speculative philosopher who assumes to have understood it.[46]

Kierkegaard saw with singular clarity the outcome of the Hegelian analysis of content and form. If the essential content of the Christian religion is a doctrine, an idea, then certainly the Christian religion belongs to the speculative

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[45] Sören Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, trans. David F. Swenson (Princeton, 1941), p. 201.

[46] Ibid., p. 193.

system as a phase or moment of the developing comprehension of mind. And it follows from this understanding of Christianity that the attempt to transform the imaginatively presented idea into a rational notion is legitimate. But if Christianity has to do, not with truth realized in a rational concept, but with truth realized in personal existence, then the Christian religion cannot be subsumed by reason as a moment of a rational system of idealistic monism. Because Christianity, as Kierkegaard recognized, is not a doctrine but an "existential communication," it cannot be transformed into idea. To translate the form of religion in the fashion of Hegelianism is to change the content itself, for the content of Christianity is the form![47]

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[47] "Christianity is not a doctrine but an existential communication expressing an existential contradiction. If Christianity were a doctrine it would eo ipso not be an opposite to speculative thought, but rather a phase within it. Christianity has to do with existence, with the act of existing; but existence and existing constitute precisely the opposite of speculation . . . . Precisely because Christianity is not a doctrine it exhibits the principle . . . that there is a tremendous difference between knowing what Christianity is and being a Christian. In connection with a doctrine such a distinction is unthinkable, because a doctrine is not relevant to existing. It is not my fault that the age in which we live has reversed the relationship, and transformed Christianity into a philosophical doctrine that asks to be understood, and turned being a Christian into triviality. To assume that this denial that Christianity is a doctrine should imply that Christianity is contentless, is merely a chicane. When the believer exists in his faith his existence acquires tremendous content, but not in the sense of paragraph materia" (ibid., pp. 339-340).

In a note to the above paragraph Kierkegaard writes: "Surely it is one thing for something to be philosophical doctrine which desires to be intellectually grasped and speculatively understood, and quite another thing to be a doctrine to be realized in existence" (ibid., p. 339).

3. Content of the Form

Content and form are not finally separated by Hegel; rather, he recognizes their interpenetration and mutual determination. This recognition motivates his attempt to replace the form of religion with Idea. It follows that Hegel's protest against the inadequacies of the form of religious expression is also a protest against the content conveyed by these forms in themselves, and that Hegel's positive reconstruction produces a new content, in so far as the form makes the content what it is.

The attempt to define the essential character of Christianity, as the controversies in the history of Christian thought illustrate, encounters difficulties. The problem of a systematic statement of faith is somewhat analogous to the problem in philosophy of creating a system embracing the whole of reality. The difficulty involved in defining Christianity, however, is heightened by what has been adjudged to be "the impossibility of stating adequately by means of concepts and propositions a principle which presents itself in the form of a person."[48]

This impossibility Hegel rejects precisely because he seeks to transmute particularity. The Absolute content of Christianity, in the judgment of Hegel, is not particular,

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[48] H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (New York, 1951), p. 14.

personal or unique, but is the comprehensive and universal Idea. The genius of Christianity, consequently, is interpreted by Hegel in concepts and propositions. He repudiates the unique fact--the personal reality of Jesus Christ and the personal encounter of the individual with God in Christ--and, by the repudiation, substitutes a radically new content. In its form as religious consciousness the content is merely historical and particular; in Hegel's judgment, the actual content, however, is the universal essentiality of Mind. The idea, the principle of Christ, is something that is general and not particular; it can be detached from the fact of Christ! Christianity, therefore, shares with philosophy this essential content. But it is Hegel's thesis that the Idea of Christianity is rational and, therefore, general truth. It is not uniquely related to particular event or person, although it may be realized in a particular person. It involves not a commitment to the Truth but an actualization of the Truth in the development of rational consciousness.

After this fashion, Christian doctrine is granted philosophical certification by Hegel. Christianity loses its rationally scandalous character in Hegel's review of its content; it becomes, in fact, perfectly rational. The genius of Christianity, as the chapters of this study have shown, is to depict Absolute Idea. That universality becomes particularity and thus accomplishes the reconciliation of infinite and finite mind is the plain reality of Mind as Absolute Knowledge.

Hegel's principle of the identity in difference of Mind involves the assumption that the divine and human nature is essentially related. Therefore, there is nothing scandalous to this system in the assertion that God was incarnate in Jesus Christ for there is no ultimate contradiction between the Infinite and the finite; they are united in the dialectic of union in difference. It is indeed somewhat misleading to say that God is incarnate in the finite. The content of this idea is more accurately suggested by the assertion that the finite is the incarnation of God.[49] Jesus, therefore, was God incarnate because he was man, but this does not make him in any sense absolutely unique. Nor is there anything uniquely compelling in the witness that man is reconciled to God in Jesus Christ for it is simply a statement of the actualization of man's potential nature.

As faith seeks to understand itself, it finds expression in theology. Christian theology attempts to construct an intelligible and systematic statement of the content of Christian faith out of the material given to it in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and Christian experience. This activity of theology is inevitable and necessary, and Hegel justly deserves credit for a disciplined attempt to comprehend faith. But Hegel's presentation of the Christian faith is essentially

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[49] Cf. McTaggart, Studies in Hegelian Cosmology, pp. 218 ff.

a philosophical rather than a theological activity by virtue of the fact that he dispenses with the unique presentation of the content of faith. When he speaks of Jesus Christ, Hegel does not refer to the unique fact, the personal reality of Jesus Christ; his reference is rather to a principle or idea. This is manifest in the attempt to derive and validate Christian faith from rational principle in complete independence from any givenness. His system refuses to admit anything to the presentation of the Christian faith which is not mediated by the consciousness of Mind. All otherness, all givenness, by the basic premise of absolute idealism is ruled out, for, given the premise that the rational is the real, and the real is rational, nothing is finally separated from Mind, nothing comes to be known which is other than the result of rational activity.

The Absolute of the Hegelian system is produced by the full development of human cognition. The conclusions for a doctrine of God to be drawn from Hegel's attempt to realize the Absolute as a final moment of human consciousness reached their final expression in Feuerbach's statement of The Essence of Christianity. For Hegel, man is essentially Mind, and the actuality of Mind, Reason, is the Real and the True. Feuerbach, while differing in the designation of the essence of man, follows Hegelianism to its legitimate conclusion when he asserts that "the human is the real and the true"; not a separate absolute, but man in his essence is the most real being. "God,"

Hegel writes, "is thus the result of philosophy." Feuerbach asserts that God is nothing more than the infinitude of mankind. The presentation of divine otherness, the whole dimension of absoluteness in separation is simply the fruitless attempt of man to escape his own being. "_Man has his highest being, his God, in himself_, not in himself as an individual but in his essential nature."[50] The result is that "Theology is anthropology, that is, in the object of religion which we call _Theos_ in Greek and _Gott_ in German, nothing but the essence of man is expressed."[51]

The distinction of the threefold development of Spirit (God in himself, the objectification of God in the other of finite particularity, the synthesis of these two moments in the Self-Consciousness of Absolute Mind) is maintained in the form of religion, Hegel charges, as a static diversity and their movement is represented simply as a historical fact.[52] What belief fails to understand is that "these distinct ultimate Realities, when brought back by thought into themselves out of the flux of the actual world, are changeless, eternal spirits, whose being lies in thinking the unity which they constitute."[53] Accordingly, the being of God is to be equated

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[50] _The Essence of Christianity_, p. 281.

[51] Quoted in "Introductory Essey" by Karl Barth, _The Essence of Christianity_, p. xv.

[52] _The Phenomenology of Mind_, p. 554.

[53] _Ibid._, p. 555.

with the comprehension of the unity which the three moments are.

The God of Hegel's system is active, for Idea is not static but involves a process of self-determined development. The Absolute comes to be known through, or in, this activity. What qualifies this picture of an active Absolute, known in the activity, is the fact, as Karl Barth notes in his critical review of Hegel's thought, that "the Hegelian self-movement of truth is identical with the self-movement of the thinking subject."[54] While Hegel saw with a greater clarity than many theologians that God is known only in his activity, the Hegelian doctrine of God does not involve the confessional recital of the activity of God but the repetition in the mind of the activity that is God.

H. R. Mackintosh sees in this presentation of the being God, as the developing self-consciousness of Absolute Mind, "the most sinister feature" in the entire construction of Hegelian theology, for here the emphasis is laid on the point "that it is in the development of the finite mind that the Infinite and Absolute, or God, first rises to consciousness of self . . . . Thus, it would appear, the Absolute has reality only in the thought of those who believe in Him. And history is now seen to be God's realization of Himself through, or in,

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[54] Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl, p. 302.

the process of human experience."[55] It is certainly true that the Absolute comes to self-conscious being, being in-and-for-itself, in man, for the phenomenology of mind is the process of realization of absolute self-consciousness. It would seem to follow that the Absolute is only real as the knowledge of self-conscious identity in Mind, and that God, therefore, has reality only in the consciousness of man.

A second implication of Hegel's position for a doctrine of God, noted with characteristic perspicacity by Kierkegaard, is that, if this understanding of God is followed to its conclusion, the difference between God and man is made commensurate with the relative difference between more and less intelligent men. Christianity, Kierkegaard argued, witnesses to the absolute difference distinguishing man from God, and to what is the unique and paradoxical event at the heart of the Christian faith--that God existed in human form.[56] The absolute paradox cannot be related in terms of a relative difference between a more or less rational comprehension of the whole. "The absolute paradox, just because it is absolute," Kierkegaard writes--

> can be relevant only to the absolute difference that distinguishes man from God, and has nothing to do with the relative wrangling between man and man with respect to the fact one man

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[55] Types of Modern Theology, p. 103.

[56] Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 194.

> has little more brains than another. But the absolute difference between God and man consists precisely in this, that man is a particular existing being (which is just as much true of the most gifted human being as it is of the most stupid), whose essential task cannot be to think sub specie aeterni, since as long as he exists he is, though eternal, essentially an existing individual, whose essential task it is to concentrate upon inwardness in existing; while God is infinite and eternal. As soon as I make the understanding of the paradox commensurable for the difference between more or less of intellectual talent (a difference which cannot take us beyond the being human, unless a man were to become so gifted that he was not merely a man but also God), my words show eo ipso that what I have understood is not the absolute paradox but a relative one, for in connection with the absolute paradox the only understanding possible is that it cannot be understood.[57]

If God in the Hegelian system is the ultimate moment of the rational consciousness of man, then the question which needs to be answered is--what, for this system, is a man? The absolute moment of consciousness is realized by the negation of particular individuality. The particular, while it has validity as the antithetical moment of the universal, is subsumed in the union of universality and particularity, a union in which particularity as such loses its unique identity. Hegel attempts to reconcile his understanding of man with the Christian religion by the principle of life through death. "Whoever seeks to save his life loses it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it,"[58] translated into Hegelian thought form, is the principle that through the negation of the negative moment of particular self-consciousness, the ultimate

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[57] Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 195.

[58] Luke 17:33.

positive moment of the Self-consciousness of Absolute Mind is realized! But the abstract and objective system, by the very content of its form, repudiates the validity of the existence of the individual man.

Discussing freedom as the actuality of self-determination, Hegel designates the true being of man as the self-determination of Idea: "If to be aware of the idea--to be aware, i.e. that men are aware of their essence, aim and object--is a matter of *speculation*, still this very idea itself is the actuality of men--not something which they *have*, as men, but which they *are*."[59] The essence of man is thus potential universality; the existence of man is particularity; and the actuality of man, achieved by negating this existent particularity, is *to be* consciously this universality. To come to actuality means for the particular individual to no longer be an individual. In the system, therefore, particularity necessarily must be transcended.

The conclusion of this argument is that man becomes man by no longer being a man. The Hegelian system, as Kierkegaard shows, is vulnerable at this point. The focus of Kierkegaard's ardent attack on Hegelianism was precisely this point--the individual. Kierkegaard, noting that the system could not be attacked from within, stated that the Archimedean point, the point outside the system from which the whole system could be

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[59] *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 101.

moved, was "the individual ethically and religiously conceived and existentially accentuated."[60] This is true because, while from the perspective of idealistic monism to be a particular individual is meaningless, the only true and significant reality of a human being is to be a particular individual.[61]

The whole perspective of the system is wrong, Kierkegaard argued. The system may have the existent for one of its objects, but the knowing subject is an existing individual and cannot separate himself from the fact of his existence. Against Hegel, Kierkegaard urged the priority of the individual in knowledge, in existence, and, supremely, in religion. To insist on objective universality as the true essence of man is to make of the human being something fantastic. The universal may be objectively real, but if so, man as man is not this universal, for a man, in his very nature, is a particular existent individual.

In making Christianity a universally valid idea, Hegel radically alters the Christian conception of faith. For the Christian believer truth is apprehended in the commitment of faith. Contrary to Hegel, man does not actualize the Truth; rather he acknowledges it. This nature of truth, Kierkegaard designates as "an objective uncertainty held fast in an

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[60] Point of View, trans. Walter Lowrie (Oxford, 1939), p. 131n.

[61] Cf. Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 134.

appropriation process of the most passionate inwardness."[62] Only in "subjectivity" can such truth exist; this is truth that happens in the personal reality of the existent individual. In this truth the individual is established in the inwardness of his existence, with the intensity of commitment. Christian truth is received, not as an indifferent truth, as would be the case in a mathematical proposition, but as a personal truth calling for individual involvement with the Truth. What Kierkegaard calls "the paradox of faith" is "that the individual is higher than the universal, that the individual . . . determined his relation to the universal by his relation to the absolute, not his relation to the absolute by his relation to the universal."[63]

It was Kierkegaard's contention that, precisely because Christianity accentuates the fact of "existence" and "inwardness," the Hegelian system is the greatest possible misunderstanding of Christianity.[64] Following this to its conclusion, the point can be made that, whatever its intention, the special form of Hegelian Christianity transmutes the content of the Christian religion. Hegelianism has the value of a religion for it offers a way of salvation for man subsisting as a

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[62] Ibid., p. 182.

[63] Fear and Trembling, trans. Walter Lowrie (New York, 1955), p. 80.

[64] Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 507; cf. pp. 243, 338, 201.

universal but not as an individual man. The fundamental religious orientation is the principle of the potential reconciliation coming to actualization by a process of the development of universal consciousness in the particular mind. While it has the value of a religion of salvation the conclusion does not necessarily follow that Hegelianism should be called Christian. The realization of salvation itself denies the fundamental character of the special content-form of Christianity--personal reality.

The dialectical confrontation of the content of the form of the Christian religion with the Hegelian system reveals the latter's failure to achieve a genuine reconciliation of reason and revelation in the system. The absolute, or God of the system, is not God; man is not man; and the mediator is not Jesus Christ but a principle, an idea. Under the constraint of the system, man is made over as a fantastic figure; abstracted from existence, the individual takes on the comic form of a thinker who does not exist, and thus pretends to be something he is not. Man is simply a moment of the Absolute. God is drawn into the system as the ultimate category of thought. Man in his rational activity is thus the creator of God, in so far as he is the coming-to-be of God. For Hegel, God is the essence of man *and* man is the actuality of God. The union of the two is expressed by the idea of the incarnation, the content of the hyphenated form God-Man.

4. Christianity and Absolute Idealism

Upon a system which has been called, in a judgment few would dispute, "a supreme expression of the idealistic outlook on the universe,"[65] Hegel grafted a philosophical interpretation of Christianity. The result is a comprehensive, systematic statement of a distinct approach to the genius of Christianity. Much of what has been said regarding the Hegelian interpretation of Christianity belongs, however, not to the idea of Christianity according to Hegel alone, but to the general metaphysical position of absolute or objective idealism. Correspondingly, many of the critical comments apply with equal validity to idealism in general. With varying degrees of completeness, idealistic systems presuppose an essential continuity of human reason with Ultimate Reality. Upon this assumption is constructed a fundamentally timeless, determined system, which, in its statement, reflects a basic self-confidence of reason. Hegel's thought, articulating as it does the idealistic outlook on the universe, suggests the inherent contradiction between the world view of the Christian religion and idealistic metaphysics. Specifically, four basic elements in Hegelian idealism--essential continuity, timelessness, necessity, self-confident reason--bring the conflict into focus.

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[65] J. B. Baillie, "Translator's Introduction," The Phenomenology, p. 52.

a. Essential Continuity

Reason and reality are in no way disjunct for idealism, since the real is rational, and the rational is the real. In fact, nothing is alien to reason, for what is, is rational. This essential continuity between mind and reality is more than a principle of knowledge; it is primarily a metaphysics, a world view which holds reality to be mind. Man as mind is thus related to the real and the true and, thus, is essentially continuous with Absolute Mind. The common term is mind. The Absolute is not separated as something other than mind, but is the essence of all mind. Man in his essence is thus a constituent of the Absolute.

Reason comprehends God in the Hegelian analysis. By virtue of continuity of mind, the activity of pure thought is not simply reflection about God but is the consciousness wherein God is conscious of himself, the very self-consciousness of the Absolute Mind. The actuality of God is Mind conscious of itself as Mind. There is nothing outside of this enclosed activity of Mind. Man is potentially God; God is the actualized potential of man. Nothing is hidden from reason, nothing is separated from the being of man as mind.

The principle of essential continuity involves a denial of any qualitative distinction between God and man. Although a man may be existentially mere man, as man, he is essentially one with God. That which separates a man from the Absolute is a matter of unrealized potentiality. The only doctrine of

creation possible within the limits of this essential continuity is the determination of the Absolute _in_ its other. The moment itself may be a negation, an antithetical moment, but it is, as such, only a moment of a process in which its negation is being transmuted. The distinction, and this is specifically Hegelian, is the perfecting of the abstract universal by a process which moves through particularity on to the identity in difference of universality and particularity. The moment of synthesis, of reconcilement, is the actualization of identity in difference; it is not a matter of the establishment of communion with an other as separated from the particular, but the union of the particular consciousness with its own essential universal content. Knowledge of the Absolute is not given to man, but is realized by man as he becomes aware of his own essential nature. Consequently, knowledge of God and of God's will and reconciliation with God is the potentiality of _man's own consciousness_. Man need only come to rational self-awareness in absolute knowledge and he is one with God as Absolute Mind.

The ultimate end, the final cause which is determinative of all human experience, is the realization of Absolute Knowledge. This purpose, Hegel writes, is none other than Absolute Spirit "finding _itself_--coming to _itself_--and contemplating _itself_ in concrete actuality . . . this Reason [the Reason, that is, which governs the world] is _immanent_ in historical existence and reaches _its own perfection in and through this_

existence."[66] The final aim is the purpose of the Absolute, but God, the absolute and perfect Being, can will nothing but himself, his own will.[67] Therefore, creation, revelation, and redemption are ways of expressing the Absolute willing himself in man. This is the apotheosis of man.

Precisely at this point of essential continuity a radical contradiction is exhibited between the world view of Christianity and the metaphysics of idealism. The Christian religion witnesses to the activity of God in creation, in revelation and in redemption. A continuity is present, but it is not an essential but adventitious, that is, of Grace. Creation is not the determined necessity of the universal Absolute, but the activity of God in calling into being what in itself has no necessary basis for existence. The knowledge of God is not the realization by man of his own essential content but it is an awareness of God afforded to man by the gracious self-manifestation of God. The conformity which allows the possibility of coming to know is not the essential conformity of mind, but the conformity supplied to man by God. Reconciliation demands a commonness, but, in the Christian faith, it is not the commonness of an essential relation, but the communion of a personal encounter.

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66. Reason in History, p. 31 (italics mine).

67. Ibid., p. 25.

If God is taken seriously as an Absolute Being, then he cannot be the development of the consciousness of man, or, if he is regarded as an expression of the rational consciousness, he is nothing more than the intelligent man actualized. The relationship between man and God on the basis of essential continuity specifically contradicts the nature of this relationship in the Christian religion. Few religious thinkers have grasped, with the same completeness that Kierkegaard did, the actual importance of discontinuity in religion. The relationship between God and man, Kierkegaard insisted, is not the emulation of an ideal, nor is it an attempt to express a direct likeness, but because the difference is absolute, the relationship is best expressed in worship. Worship is not an accomplishment; it is not a comprehension of an object, as in thought; it is rather an acknowledgement of difference and dependence. This is Kierkegaard's thesis when he writes--

> In man's absolute relationship to God this absolute difference must therefore come to expression, and any attempt to express an immediate likeness becomes impertinence, frivolity, effrontery, and the like. . . . Precisely because there is an absolute difference between God and man, man will express his own nature most adequately when he expresses this difference absolutely. Worship is the maximum expression for the God-relationship of a human being, and hence also for his likeness with God, because the qualities are absolutely different. But the significance of worship is that God is absolutely all for the worshipper; and the worshipper is again one who makes the absolute distinction.[68]

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[68] Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 369.

Worship in this sense is incomprehensible for a system which sees the relationship between man and God as the realization of essential continuity.

It is true that for idealism in general, and for Hegel in particular, the salvation of the individual involves the finding of the self as a particular consciousness in the Absolute. This is the moment in which the Absolute is no longer something objective but an expression of the very consciousness of mind. The inadequacy of religious belief, by contrast, is to be found at this very point according to Hegel, for belief continues to regard its Absolute as a foreign element remaining somehow distinct from the self-consciousness. But the Christian witness is clear on this point, and it cannot accept the judgment of idealism without destroying the content of the Christian experience. The Christian religion is a matter of personal communion, and therefore, the established relationship, while it expresses a consciousness of reconciliation, of involvement, is not the essential union of realized continuity, but accepted reconciliation accomplished by an activity other than the self-conscious mind in itself.

The transition into a condition of reconcilement is, for absolute idealism, fundamentally, a moment within a process of realization. For Hegel, accordingly, becoming a Christian is to be described in terms such as "realization," "actualization." Essential continuity is the underlying principle which makes such an understanding of the significance of becoming a

Christian possible. By this means, idealism emasculates the decisive categories of the Christian experience. The decisiveness of faith, the "leap" which expresses the discontinuity, is transmuted, and with it the significance of becoming a Christian is radically altered. Belief in the Christian sense is not a determined moment in a necessary development or process, but a free act, an expression of the whole man. It involves man as an existing individual in the passion of commitment; it is a coming to know, but a coming to know that is not an actualization but an acknowledgement; it is not a deification of the individual but a reconciliation in the form of personal communion.

In addition to radically changing the character of the Christian understanding of religious knowledge and, even more basic, the relationship between God and man, the principle of essential continuity issues in a theological statement which is not theistic but pantheistic in its implications. Hegel recognized the danger of this charge and his writings included numerous specific attempts to ward off the charge. But, while pantheism as Hegel defines it--the particular as such is God, or everything is God[69]--cannot be attributed to Hegel, the assumption of essential continuity of mind, and the identification of the whole and the Absolute, opens Hegelian thought to the charge of pantheism. The monism of idea inevitably leads

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[69] Philosophy of Mind, pp. 183 ff.

to this conclusion. The system itself is at fault. Its finality, its comprehension of the Absolute in thought, its insistence that reason embraces all that is real, will not admit a God outside of or separated from the system. God is thus nothing more than the principle of ultimate rationality coming to articulate consciousness in rational thought. The activity of reason is itself the Absolute.

b. Timelessness

History acquires crucial significance for Hegel's system since it is in history that the concretion of idea takes place. The concretion is in time, for time, in his system, is the dimension of spirit, even as space is the dimension of nature. The time in which spirit comes to fulfillment, however, is not objective event but consciousness, the phenomenon of mind. In the closing paragraph of The Phenomenology of Mind, Hegel asserts that "the goal, which is Absolute Knowledge of Spirit knowing itself as Spirit," finds its direction in the realization of the mental forms of idea. This interpenetration of subject and object may be regarded as history or as the phenomenology of mind. The development "looked at from the side of their [spiritual forms] free existence appearing in the form of contingency is History; looked at from the side of their intellectually comprehended organization, it is the Science [Phenomenology] of the ways in which knowledge

appears."[70] The two are parallel; history depicts what is the necessary development of Mind.

The process is not so much temporal or successive as it is logical. Introducing his philosophy of history, Hegel states that the course of world history involves change and succession only in the sense of development. "The principle of development," he continues, "implies further that it is based on an inner principle, a presupposed potentiality, which brings itself into existence. The formal determination is essentially the Spirit whose scene, property, and sphere of realization is world history."[71] The process is temporal in that it is the consciousness of mind, but the determination is that of the timeless, inherently determined pattern of the dialectic of Idea. The stages of the development are successive and represent movement, but it is a movement circumscribed and determined by consciousness of mind determining itself. Time thus is simply the development of Idea in consciousness.

The Absolute is manifested in time for it is realized in consciousness. Hegel speaks to Christian theology by insisting on, in the words of Barth noted above, "the possibility that Truth might be history, event. . . ."[72] But because, as Barth also states, "the Hegelian self-movement of Truth is

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[70] The Phenomenology, p. 808.

[71] Reason in History, pp. 68-69.

[72] Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl, p. 299.

identical with the self-movement of the thinking subject,"[73] this understanding of the actualization of Truth in time directly contradicts the Christian understanding of Truth as event.

The Absolute is in time, but the time in which it is manifested is essentially timeless. For all his avowal of history, history is really empty for Hegel, because historical time is meaningless and empty particularity for the system of the timeless determination of idea. There is no place in the system for the uniqueness of a moment in history as separated from all other moments, nor for the uniqueness of a person as a historical phenomenon, nor for the uniqueness of a non-repeatable event. The very character of history as event is repudiated by the finality of a system in which nothing really new can emerge. That which does appear is essentially timeless, for it is the development from the implicit to what is explicit; it is as timeless in its realization as a deduction from a premise.

In Hegel's philosophy of religion, it appears that the contrast between general revelation and the special historical revelation is overcome by the simple device of regarding history as the scene of the realization of idea. But, as Emil Brunner notes, the connection with history is more apparent than real. This is manifestly true at the decisive point of

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[73] *Ibid.*, p. 302.

uniqueness. Brunner, explicating the Christian witness to revelation in a unique, absolute, decisive historical event, attacks the general perspective of idealism, and the specific position of Hegel. In The Mediator, Brunner writes:

> Through the philosophy of Hegel history itself became a 'universal' . . . . the mind is able to think out rationally the course of history by means of the dialectic logic of history . . . . The mind which comprehends the stages of history as necessary elements in development is by this fact of comprehension master of history, independent of the historical and particular. To him history is merely a picture-book, whose text he knows without the aid of the pictures; to him it means the Idea made concrete, hence there is nothing decisive about it. In its absolute and serious sense, there is no room here for the category of uniqueness. Here also the statement of Fichte that the metaphysical alone saves and not the historical may be applied very aptly.[74]

The dynamic process of the development of consciousness, which is the essence of history for Hegel, replaces revelation as historical event in Hegel's interpretation of Christianity. This absolutizing of the process, viewed in terms of dialectical logic, is the assertion that the diremption is the notion, and, in terms of the total system, it is the assertion that history is the realization of God. History, consequently, is the self-manifestation of God, and, through the self-determined process of the timeless consciousness, the opposition between the divine and human nature is overcome. Reconciliation is thus realized. This reconciliation is accomplished by history

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[74] The Mediator, pp. 36-37.

itself, by time as consciousness, and thus the process of Mind is itself the mediator.

Since the process as a whole is the Absolute, all particular moments in history are relativized. The moment of the Christ, accordingly, becomes the moment of man as man. "His work," Hegel writes, "is simply to complete the higher consciousness of man."[75] This is not the accomplishment of an historical moment as unique, personal, and decisive, but the universal, general, and apodictic development of Mind. This is the moment of Absolute Knowledge, the necessarily determined final moment in which the timeless development of consciousness reaches its fulfillment. Absolute Idealism calls for the salvation of the individual from particular consciousness, but the development of consciousness itself actualizes this reconciliation of the particular and the Absolute. The result of this presentation of a timeless process is a clear contradiction of the Christian witness to an historical event, Jesus the Christ as the revelation and reconciliation of God. In so far as Christ has significance for this idealistic system, it is as the moment of the actualization of timeless consciousness of the saved man and not as unique revelation and reconciliation of God in an historical person. The believer is joined to this moment, not by acceptance and commitment but by the specific repetition of the moment of Absolute Knowledge.

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75. Werke, bd. XVI, Philosophie der Religion, p. 287.

c. Necessity

The science of pure idea, The Logic of the Hegelian system, represents the self-determined development of the categories of rational intelligence according to a pattern of development which is an internally determined, dynamic movement from the ultimately simple category, "being," to the most comprehensive category, "Idea." The same pattern of self-determined dynamism, expressing this time the science of the way in which knowledge appears, undergirds Hegel's analysis of The Phenomenology of Mind. And in the encyclopaedic survey of the philosophical sciences, Reality as a whole is presented as the determined process, the development, from the absolute universality of idea in itself, through the objectification of idea, to the final moment of idea in-and-for-itself in the self-consciousness of Mind. In all its expressions in the Hegelian system, the dynamic dialectical movement is not the product of a force imposed upon idea, that is, it is not someone thinking the categories, nor upon consciousness nor upon reality as a whole, rather the movement is an internal, self-determined development.

Hegel's philosophy presents a dynamic system of idea, but it is an enclosed dynamism. The directing force of Hegel's intellectual labors was the desire to articulate a system of complete, unified wholeness, and this in itself determines the terminus of the process. The interpenetration of subject and object, Spirit conscious of itself as Spirit, is the final

moment, the goal. The development is confined within the system, secondly, by the very pattern of dialectical development. The method is the system and determines its content.

Given the ruling principle of the dialectic, all facets of Hegelian thought--logic, nature, mind, history, art, religion, philosophy--express an inevitable, necessary process of development. The force providing the impetus to movement is internal to the process itself. The movement is initiated and sustained by inherent contradiction, by negation, and therefore, by the content itself. Thesis results in antithesis, and in turn the contradiction inherent in the first negation of antithesis produces the negation of the negation in synthesis. Nothing can be contingent in this relentless, fixed development. Nothing can limit or determine the process of development other than the process itself, for the process is determined by itself.

Only because Hegel imposes upon the system an end or goal is there a final moment. The Absolute moment is at the same time this dialectic process and its result. Whether it be in the abstruse analysis of pure idea, or in the comprehensive final moment of Spirit conscious of itself as Spirit, the synthesis is not something apart from the process of its realization but is the identity in difference of the dialectic of thesis and antithesis.

The nature of the Absolute of the Hegelian system as determined process and result calls into question the facile

identification of the God of Christian theology and the Hegelian Absolute. Behind all that Hegel says about God there is an implicit assumption of a determination more ultimate than God, a necessity which is virtually the God beyond God. This determination is the logical necessity, or more particularly, the necessity of Hegel's own dialectical system. Thus God, at the very least, is the prisoner of the system. This necessity is the very nature of God for Hegel. The system itself becomes the Absolute.

The determined metaphysics of idea raises serious obstacles for any attempt to reconcile Hegelian reason and the Christian understanding of God. God reveals himself, according to the absolute idealism of Hegel, not by a gracious self-manifestation, but by the necessary process of self-determination. The other of God is the necessary antithetical moment in the full development of the Absolute moment. What is viewed in Christian theology as the alienation of man from God in the condition of sinful self-assertion becomes in the system an essential moment of the whole. Reconciliation is the final determination joining the universal and the particular. Only then does Absolute Mind complete itself. Consequently, man is necessary to God. Under the direction of the necessary dialectical determination, the God revealed in Jesus Christ is viewed as being compelled by the inherent necessity of the process of the dialectic to this moment of reconciliation. Thus the revelation and reconciliation of God in Jesus

Christ is not the gracious or free act of God but the determined necessity of the Absolute.

The adoption of the self-determined necessity of idea and the concomitant failure to grasp the Christian witness to the gracious free activity of God brings the deterministic metaphysics of Hegelian idealism into sharp conflict with the Christian message. Karl Barth calls this "the weightiest and most significant of the doubts about him [Hegel] which might be raised from the theological point of view."[76] Barth concludes that "Hegel, in making the dialectic method of logic the essential nature of God, made impossible the knowledge of actual dialectic of grace, which has its foundation in the freedom of God."[77] This judgment seems valid because the Hegelian system subjects God to a higher necessity, the necessity of the dialectic process, when, by contrast, if God is understood as gracious and free in his redemptive activity, as he is in Christian theology, grace by its very nature makes such a necessity unthinkable.

But the issue is not simply determined necessity in itself. The conflict is apparent, not so much in the point that God is determined in necessary activity, as in the fact that according to this system God is determined by what the philosopher comprehends in his rational analysis. The thinker

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76. Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl, p. 304.

77. Ibid.

comprehends God and therefore mind determines the activity of God by the system! God is conscious of himself in man, therefore, man in his rational comprehension is the determination of God. Surely, this is the epitome of the confidence of idealism in rational activity--God is the result of philosophy.[78]

d. Self-confident Reason

As a result of the identification of the rational and the real in idealism, rational thought is not merely the charter of a particular thinking subject but also of Reality itself. This conviction of self-confident reason finds its supreme expression in the thought of Hegel. "The fast-bound substance of the universe," Hegel stated in an address to his students at the University of Berlin, "has no power within capable of withstanding the courage of man's knowledge: it must give way before him, and lay bare before his eyes, and for his enjoyment, its riches and its depths."[79] Carried over into theology this confidence is the conviction that reason comprehends God; the divine essence is to be found in consciousness, for "all that God is, He imparts and reveals."[80]

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[78] Werke, bd. XV, Philosophie der Religion, p. 43.

[79] Address of October 22, 1818, quoted in "Translator's Introduction," The Phenomenology, p. 40.

[80] The Logic, p. 254.

The refusal to accept any essential limitation of mind is expressed in Hegel's religious thought by his declared intention to replace the inadequate forms of religious expression with the perfect articulation of the content of religion in the form of the self-thinking idea. Limitation, the character of finitude as that which is determined by something else, is the nature of untruth and is, therefore, repudiated by the system of the concrete whole. The inability of mind to realize knowledge of the Absolute is unthinkable for Hegel simply because he cannot accept anything as separate from Mind.

The attempt to transcend the forms of religious expression represents an unwillingness on the part of Hegelian idealism to accept revelation as something given to man and not realized by man as rational intelligence, and even more basic, an unwillingness to accept finitude as the character of human existence. The fulfillment of the religious consciousness is, for Hegel, the realization of the incarnation, the union of God-Man actualized by the consciousness in absolute knowledge. This deified Mind is in this system the very consciousness wherein Mind is conscious of itself as Absolute Mind.

Faith judged by the rational self-confidence of the Hegelian system is an incomplete comprehension of the truth which awaits its perfection in knowledge. If the mind is capable of comprehending Absolute Reality, as a moment of the consciousness of mind, then certainly belief or faith is an inadequate union of the Absolute and the mind. Belief is

nothing more than inchoate or partial awareness of the absolute. The contrast between rational comprehension and belief displays the superiority of knowledge. There is no uncertainty in moment of rational knowledge but full and complete comprehension; there is no risk but perfect and systematic security. Reconciliation does not involve a commitment but the conscious experience of the actualization of Idea in absolute knowledge.

In contrast with the Hegelian thought, Kierkegaard contended that the religious consciousness itself vanishes when man fails to recognize his own inability to comprehend the Absolute. What remains as the content of consciousness, whatever else it may be, is, by its very character of self-confidence, not the religious consciousness. In understanding that he is nothing before God, and in this meek understanding alone, the character of the religious consciousness is present in man.[81] Faith viewed as a lower form of rational comprehension is not faith, for, as Kierkegaard notes, "without risk there is no faith."[82] If man is capable of grasping God by the activity of his mind, he is not related to him by faith, but knows in the apodictic certainty of rational knowledge. But precisely because man cannot do this, precisely because he cannot possess God in his rational intelligence, or in the construct of a philosophical system, man is related to God by

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[81] Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 412.

[82] Ibid., p. 182; cf. p. 188.

faith. Man does not possess God, man does not hold God in his mind; rather man is possessed by the gracious, forgiving, reconciling activity of God. Christianity interpreted as an expression of the content of a philosophical system, as a moment of speculative knowledge, spares the individual from what Kierkegaard called "the martyrdom of believing against the understanding, the peril of lying upon the deep, the seventy thousand fathoms, in order there to find God,"[83] for it leaves man still wading in his own depth, and in so doing, radically contradicts the relation of God to man and man to God revealed in Jesus Christ.

The philosophy of Hegel, Barth declares, is, above all else, a philosophy of self-confidence.[84] It is "the philosophy of the confidence of thinking man in the dignity, strength and nature of his thought."[85] Hegel is completely confident that what the mind, as an expression of rational intelligence,

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[83] Ibid., p. 208. Kierkegaard insists that his thesis that truth is subjectivity, that truth is "an objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation process of the most passionate inwardness," is an equivalent expression for faith. "Faith," he continues, "is precisely the contradiction between the infinite passion of the individual's inwardness and the objective uncertainty. If I am capable of grasping God objectively, I do not believe, but precisely because I cannot do this, I must believe. If I wish to preserve myself in faith I must constantly be intent upon holding fast the objective uncertainty, so as to remain out upon the deep, over seventy thousand fathoms of water, still preserving my faith" (ibid., p. 182).

[84] Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl, p. 275.

[85] Ibid., p. 282.

thinks, is identical with its object, and when the object is Reality Itself, that reason fully comprehends the Absolute. Mind as reason is one with the ultimate rationality--the Mind which is continuous with the Absolute. This confidence in reason is, therefore, essentially the confidence in the self as identical with the Absolute and in the self-initiated power of mind to know the Absolute and to be reconciled to the Absolute. Hegel's system as a whole is designed to enforce and defend this self-confidence of reason. It is in this sense that the Hegelian system articulates, according to Barth, the mind of modern man, for Hegel expresses what Barth describes as "self-confidence, qualified as confidence in God, confidence in God given concrete form as self-confidence."[86]

In his interpretation of Christian theology, Barth contrasts the self-confidence of man with what he represents as the Christian witness to the absolute priority of God in revelation and redemption. The determining factor for the knowledge of God is not the activity of human reason but the free and gracious activity of God in revealing himself. To imply that this is an expression of human intelligence is to so limit the sovereignty of God as to destroy the significance of the unique revelation of God in the word made flesh. To assert that the reconciliation is an achievement of the human

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[86] Ibid., p. 281.

mind is so completely to alter the character of redemption as to make it something other than the Christian message of reconciliation.

Even in a most limited evaluation of the meaningfulness of metaphysics, the inherent contradiction between idealistic metaphysics and the perspective of the Christian faith is apparent. If metaphysics presents, as Rudolf Carnap, expressing the viewpoint of much of contemporary philosophy, suggests, nothing more than a statement of "a man's attitude in life, his emotional and volitional reaction to the environment, to society, to the tasks to which he devotes himself, to the misfortunes that befall him,"[87] and if metaphysical statements serve simply "for the expression of the general attitude of a person toward life,"[88] then the metaphysics of Hegel, as expressing his strong trust in the power of reason, his conviction that man is to be saved by the conscious realization of an absolute knowledge, stands in direct contradiction with the basic attitude and perspective of the Christian world view. The contrast is between the perspective of an acknowledged dependence, a confessed faith in God, a trust in what is other

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[87] Rudolf Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language," trans. Arthur Pap, Logical Positivism, ed. by A. J. Ayer (Glencoe, Illinois, 1959), p. 79. The article, originally entitled "Überwindung der Metaphysik durch Logische Analyse der Sprache," appeared in Erkenntnis, Vol. II, 1932.

[88] Ibid., p. 78.

than the self and the activity of the self, and the perspective of a self-confident trust of man in the omniscience, omnipotence of reason. The contrast could not be more complete.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BORN: Charles J. Ping, June 15, 1930. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Mother: Mary Marion Ping. Father: C. J. Ping.

EDUCATION: Early education: California, Georgia, Alabama.
A. B., Southwestern at Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee (1947-1951).
B. D., Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky (1951-1954).
Duke University, Durham, North Carolina (1955-1958).

MARRIED: Claire Oates, June 1951.
One child: Andrew C. Ping, born March 8, 1958.

ORDAINED: By Presbytery of Louisville, Presbyterian Church, U.S. Member of Presbytery of Saginaw, United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1959-

POSITIONS: Acting Chaplain, Culver Military Academy, Culver, Indiana (1954).
Housemaster, Men's Graduate Center, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina (1955-1957).
Stated Supply Pastor, Pittsboro Presbyterian Church, Pittsboro, North Carolina (1957-1958).
Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religion, Alma College, Alma, Michigan (1958-).

MEMBERSHIP: Omicron Delta Kappa
The American Philosophical Association

FELLOWSHIP: Olof Anderson Fellowship (awarded by Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary)